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AN

ENQUIRY

INTO THE

Nature, Necessity, and Evidence

OF

Christian Faith,

In Several

ESSAYS.

PART I.

Of Faith in General, and of the Belief of a Deity.

By *J. C.* D. D.

Vigilo } & { *Clamo*
Credo } & { *Loquor.*

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AN

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE Nature, Neceſſity, and Evidence OF Chriſtian Faith.

INTRODUCTION.

Shewing the Occaſion and Deſign of the following Eſſays.

AS certainly the Chriſtian Religion has the faireſt appearance of any, and comes to us with all the marks of Truth, being ſtampt with Characters truly Divine, and carrying along with it Authentick Teſtimonies, both from Heaven and Earth; ſo they who had the keeping of it, have, for near theſe 1700 Years, taught that *Faith* was a very conſiderable part of it, and abſolutely Neceſſary to the obtaining all thoſe Advantages which are promiſed by it.

But now there are a Set of Men who pretend new Diſcoveries: They decry *Faith* as much as it was for-

merly magnified, and turn the things propoſed to be believed into ridicule. Some of them run down *Faith*, by expoſing the Clergy, who require it, as ignorant and Fooliſh, a ſort of Men who are eaſily impoſed upon, or who, to keep up their *Trade*, ſtudy to impoſe on others, amuſing them with *myſterious Nonſenſe*. Others eſſay to prove, That *Faith* is impoſſible where Reaſon rules and is uſed; and therefore that Believing proceeds from a Defect of Reaſon, and conſequently unworthy of thoſe who own themſelves to be Men, that is, reaſonable Creatures. A Third ſort examine the ſeveral Points of *Faith*, as they are ſet forth in *Syſtems* and *Confeſſions*, and do either dwindle them away into nothing, or render them very abſurd, that is, impoſſible or no ways worthy to be believed. This Controverſie is of the higheſt Importance: all ought to be inquiſitive into it, and earneſt to know on what Side *Truth* lies, not to ſatisfie an idle Curioſity, but to diſcover the certain and ſolid foundation, if there be any ſuch thing, on which they may build their Peace and Comfort, with reſpect to the *preſent life*, and joyful hopes in reference to *that* which may be *hereafter*.

Upon this account I reſolved on this *Enquiry*, and to proceed in it with all the care that becomes a Lover of Truth, in matters of ſo very great moment, who ought not to ſuffer himſelf to be byaſs'd by his former Sentiments, nor to be carried off by the Cenſures of the World, nor to be poſſeſſed with a fondneſs for Opinions, meerly becauſe they are *New* or *Old*, Singular or Common.

My firſt aim was to ſatisfie my ſelf; and now I propoſe the giving true information to others, and for that end ſhall lay all things candidly before them, impoſing as little on them, as on my ſelf, who am not willing to be deceived. And I am confident that he, who is attentive and willing to be informed, ſhall receive plain and full *Conviction*.

To try this Matter, I do not find it proper to appeal to the Univerſal Doctrin, either of the Preſent, or Primitive

mitive Church. The Fathers may be thought as partial and incompetent Judges as the Modern Divines. Authorities have no weight with the Patrons of Incredulity, they laugh at this Method, and judge it as unreaſonable, as if one would conſult old Bigotted Ariſtotelians about the *New Philoſophy*. I know their regard to the Scriptures, is much the ſame as what they have to other Books: They read and examine it with the ſame boldneſs and freedom, and very often with leſs Modeſty than human Writings: becauſe its Aſſertions are plain, and otherwiſe unanſwerable; therefore, to ſhelter themſelves, and to defend their Opinions, they diſown its Authority, and cry it down as a Book which is not implicitly to be believed more than others. Hence it is that ſome attack the *Authentickneſs* and *Purity* of the *Text*; others, the *Integrity* and *Inſpiration* of the *Pen-men*: and all of them endeavour, one way or other, to remove the only ſure Light we have to direct our Courſe. So they would reaſon us into a fearful and troubleſom uncertainty: and they make our condition as deplorable as Perſons at Sea in a dark tempeſtuous Night, without Waggoner, Compaſs, or Pilot.

I intend not to prove the *Divine Authority* of the *Scripture*, which hath been admirably well done by ſeveral, both in this, and former Ages: I take this for granted. But if this be too great a *Poſtulatum*, it will be ſufficient for my buſineſs to ſuppoſe it in the firſt rank of Books, which it may claim, both by reaſon of its Antiquity, and the things contained in *it*. The Authors of this Holy Book merit Reverence and Eſteem, at leaſt as much as *Plato*, *Ariſtotle*, *Seneca*, *Epictetus*, *Confutius* of *China*, and other Ancients, whoſe Sentiments the World is curious to know, and which Learned Men have been employed to Collect, as uſeful to Mankind. Nay, I am willing at preſent even to paſs this too. I ask only (which cannot be Juſtly denied) a due Attention to what is ſaid in Scripture, and an impartial and unbyaſs'd conſideration of the excellency and reaſonableneſs of what it propoſes;

for then, I am ſure, that the *Doctrine of Chriſtianity* will appear divine, and true, and *worthy of all acceptation:* for *it* ſhines with Evidence, as the Light which proves and manifeſts *it ſelf* to every one that is not *blind. If our Goſpel* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *be hid, it is hid to them that are loſt*, &c. The fineſt Picture doth not look well, if it be not ſet in a proper Light. Nor doth the Goſpel appear reaſonable, when it is not duly repreſented. All the Cavils and Objections, that are made againſt it, proceed from a wrong view of it; repreſent it fairly, and there is nothing more agreeable: Its Imperfections are Beauties and admirable Contrivances: its Fooliſhneſs is the higheſt Wiſdom: its ſeeming Abſurdities and Contradictions, upon Examination, are moſt rational and perfectly conſiſtent: its Faith is Conviction and Demonſtration. In a word, it is every way *faithful* and *true*, and *worthy to be received* by the wiſeſt and moſt perfect Men, as I hope to make appear by theſe *Eſſays*, and what are to follow hereafter, which I deſire may be read with Attention and Candour, and according to the Method in which it is written: for Divine Truths are in this like the Propoſitions of *Euclid.* There is a dependency amongſt them, the firſt muſt be received before the reſt can be admitted; but tho' what is Prior in order of Nature ought to be firſt conſidered, yet it is certain, that the ſame is not ſo fully comprehended, as when what follows is known and underſtood. Thus the Exiſtence of a Deity is to be proved before a Providence, and yet the Proofs of a Providence, and ſuch a view of it, as we may have by Reaſon and Revelation, doth not only mightily confirm us in the Belief of a God, but alſo very much enlarge our Idea of him: What may be known by Nature and Reaſon, ſhould be propoſed before the Diſcoveries of Revelation; and yet the Light of Revelation doth give clearer Convictions of the former, and doth render intelligible, what before could not indeed be denied; but yet was not well underſtood. Nature and Reaſon may be compared to the dawnings

of

of the Morning, which is not to be deſpiſed; but the Diſcoveries of the Scripture, reſemble the Light of the Sun when it is mounted the Horizon, which is full and ſufficient for all that is neceſſary to our preſent State.

We ſhould have begun at that *Faith* which is peculiar to the Goſpel, and ſo ſpared our labour in proving a Deity and Providence, if the preſent growth of Atheiſm had not made it neceſſary to eſtabliſh theſe firſt. It is true, theſe Subjects have of late been excellently well-handled, to which we might have referred; but that would have been to build upon another Man's foundation. All muſt acknowledge, that theſe Subjects are of great importance, and therefore what we offer about them, ought to be kindly received both by thoſe who doubt, and thoſe who believe; that the one may be confirmed, and the other ſatisfied, in Matters that ſo nearly concern them. I would not be thought to deſpiſe ſome Proofs and Arguments which I have not uſed: Our Eſſays would have run out into vaſt Volumes, if we had amaſſed all that might have been ſaid, and therefore we have only made choice of ſuch things as either have been leaſt conſidered by others, or which may be of moſt common uſe. We do not write for the Inſtruction of thoſe who have been bred in Univerſities, and therefore have purpoſely waved what could not be underſtood without Metaphyſical Notions, and the abſtruſe part of Learning.

We have digeſted our Enquiries about Faith into *three Parts*, of which the preſent Eſſays make the *Firſt*: And we have been adviſed to Publiſh them ſeparately, to encourage the Reading of them: For, tho' thoſe who have moſt need of Information, have alſo generally moſt leiſure to Read; yet it is well known that they are alſo leaſt willing to undertake the Reading of what requires many Hours and much Attention. Bulky Books fright them, and they throw them by, as too great Interruptions to their Diverſions, for the moſt of their Occupations are nothing elſe. But if ſuch will not be at the

pains to read a few Sheets, they betray their Averſion to theſe Truths, and do in vain pretend to excuſe their Infidelity, by want of true Conviction.

The *Second Part* is wholly taken up about Providence, which is too copious a Subject to be exhauſted by any; but without the hazard of being vain or immodeſt, I may ſay, that there is at leaſt ſome things ſuggeſted, which may both perſwade the belief of a Providence, and alſo ſatisfie mens Minds in ſome meaſure about the Strange and Wonderful Diſpenſations of it, which, not being commonly handled, we have the more largely inſiſted on. In the *Third and laſt Part*, ſhall be conſidered that *Faith* which is founded upon *Revelation*; which alſo we ſhall indeavour to ſet in its true Light. Both theſe *Parts* ſhall follow very ſoon, if it pleaſe God to aſſiſt us; and I heartily wiſh, that all of them may prove Uſeful to the deſign propoſed, by helping to clear thoſe Truths which are of the greateſt Importance.

Essay I.

Faith is, and hath been, the Perpetual Standard of Righteouſneſs from the beginning of the World.

1. As all *Authors* (whether Hiſtorians or Philoſophers) have their *peculiar Phraſes* and *way* of *Speaking*, ſo *Faith* is a *word* and *term* proper to *Sacred Scripture*. It never occurs to us in the reading of any of the Heathen Moraliſts, in *that ſenſe* in which we meet with it almoſt in every leaf of the Holy Bible. St. *Paul* as agreeable to the other Apoſtles, he diſcourſes often, and very much of *Faith*; ſo, in three ſeveral Epiſtles, he aſſerts, that the *Juſt ſhall live by Faith*: and in one of them, he Prefaces it with an *as it is written*, teſtifying by this, that it was no New *Doctrine* of the *Goſpel*, but what was

was taught by the *Law* and the *Prophets*. And accordingly we find the ſame very *words* in the Prophet *Habakkuk*, Chap. 2. 4. whence we may conclude, that this is a *Scripture Maxim*, of certain and perpetual Verity, under every Diſpenſation, as well the former as the preſent.

2. By the *Juſt*, is to be underſtood the Good, Holy, and Righteous; in oppoſition to the Wicked and Ungodly. And *to live*, comprehends and muſt be extended to, the whole tract and courſe of their Life and Converſation; for to reſtrain it to *any ſingle*, or *individual act*, which hath not an Univerſal Influence upon the whole Man and all its Motions, is to make the Scripture and Inſpirer of it, ſpeak very improperly. He is not ſaid to Live in a place, who Lodgeth there a Night or two; but who has his conſtant Reſidence and Abode in it. Nor can he be ſaid properly to live by any Art or Science, who now and then perhaps diverteth himſelf with it; but only he who makes it his profeſſion, aim, and ſtudy, who conſtantly exerciſeth it, and ſubſiſteth by it. So when it is ſaid that the *Juſt live by Faith*, the meaning is, and muſt be, that they always *walk* by *Faith*; they order and frame their whole Life and Converſation according to it. It is the Principle by which they are actuated, and which produceth all that they do. As the Soul and Spirit give Life to the Body, excite, direct, and determine the Actions of the whole Man, ſo Faith is the Soul, Life and Spirit of a Juſt or Righteous Man, the firſt and great Principles of his Motions, the chief Rule and Director of his Actions, that which quickens his Hopes, awakens his Fears, excites and curbs his Paſſion, and which puſheth him forward to all that is ſuitable to his Rank, Quality, and other Circumſtances in which he ſtands. In a word, to *live by Faith*, muſt be to think, ſpeak, and act by it, for Life comprehends all this. And he who doth thus *live by Faith*, is truly Juſt, Good, Holy, and Righteous. For if it be true that the *Juſt do live by* Faith, it is alſo true that *they who live* by

Faith are *Juſt*. As Knowledge and Wiſdom render a Man learned and wiſe, ſo *Faith* makes one *Juſt* and *Righteous*: and this Righteouſneſs encreaſeth according to the proportion of our Faith; for there are degrees of Faith as of Life; there are weaker and ſtronger, imperfect and perfect in both.

3. Now that it is not peculiar to the ſtate of the Goſpel for the *Juſt* to *live by Faith*, but that they did ſo, under the Law, and before it, doth further appear from what the Apoſtle writes in the *Eleventh Chapter* of the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, where, by a long enumeration of particular inſtances, he proves that all the Righteous, even up to *Abel*, that is, ever ſince the Fall, did walk by *Faith*; and that *Faith* was the ſource and ſpring of both their Common, and Extraordinary Actions. And he might have aſcended higher, and ſhewed, that even in the ſtate of Innocence, *Faith* was appointed the Life and Soul of Righteouſneſs: for that Command which was given to our firſt Parents, about the *Tree of Knowledge*, in the *midſt* of the *Garden*, was to exerciſe their *Faith*, as their Tranſgreſſion was a failure of *Faith* as well as of Obedience. St. *Paul*, in the *Epiſtle* to the *Galatians*, and in the firſt Part of that to the *Romans*, purſues the ſame Truth againſt the Bigotted Jews and Judaizing Chriſtians. For to convince them of their Error, in expecting to be *Juſtified* by the *Law* of *Moſes*, He ſhews clearly, that, before the *Law* was in being, *Men* were accounted *Juſt* and *Righteous* before *God*, by reaſon of their *Faith*, and therefore that *Faith* was the permanent and perpetual Standard or Rule both for meaſuring Mens Righteouſneſs, and for obtaining their *Juſtification*. Becauſe *Abraham* was an eminent Example of *Faith*, therefore he was not only *reputed Righteous*, but had the peculiar honour to be called the *Friend of God*, and the *Father of the Faithful*, in all ſucceeding Generations. And all who believe, and *live* by *Faith*, are ſtiled the *Children* of *Abraham*, and *Heirs* of his Honour and Privileges. Upon which account they are alſo named the *Children* of *God*, the

the *holy Seed*, the *righteous Generation*, in oppoſition to the *Sons* of *Belial*, the *Wicked* and *Reprobate*, who are branded with the Character of *Unbelievers*, *Children* of *Unbelief*, *Perſons* without *Faith*, as the *Original* bears, which is υἱοὶ τῆς ἀπειθείας.

Much more might be ſaid on this Head, but it ſufficiently appears from what hath been ſaid, that according to the peculiar Dialect, both of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, *Faith* and *Holineſs*, *Believing* and *to be Juſt*, or to *live righteouſly*, are uſed indifferently, as *reciprocal Phraſes*, which import or inferr one another. And the reaſon of this Dialect is, becauſe, according to the Philoſophy of the Scripture, that which goes under the Name of *Faith*, is the firſt Principle which actuates a a good or juſt Man, and that the Goodneſs or Righteouſneſs, which is acceptable to God, is only the Effects or Expreſſions of that *Faith*, which naturally and inſeparably follow it, as the Light doth the Sun.

Now, before I proceed further, it is fit to make a little Pauſe; and it may be convenient to repreſent here the Obligation which lieth upon all, who own the Authority of Scripture, to entertain thoſe *Phraſes* and *Expreſſions*, with reſpect and reverence.

4. *They* ought to eſteem them not only Sacred, but Exact and Juſt, and the fitteſt to convey true Notions into our Minds. A Wiſe Man can expreſs his own Thoughts beſt. And ſure none can be ſuppoſed more qualified to know the moſt appoſite words for expreſſing Truth, than the Spirit of Truth, or they who are inſpired by it. *They*, who recede from the *Phraſes* of any Author, do alſo generally differ from his Sentiments, and give others occaſion to miſtake them: For the peculiar and repeated Phraſes, which one has uſed conſtantly, do give the greateſt Light to the Diſcovery of his Thoughts; For, if he had not perceived or fanſied ſome Propriety in thoſe *Phraſes*, for repreſenting what he would be at, he would not have been ſo fond of them, nor would he ſo conſtantly have uſed them, even

as

as an exact and skilful Painter, obſerveth carefully, both the Strokes and Mixtures, which are fitteſt to ſhadow out the Colours and Figures he would repreſent. But even abſtracting from the Divine Authority of Scripture, and the peculiar Inſpiration of the Pen-men, it is very great Immodeſty to offer to correct and amend their Expreſſions; as if any now a-days could expreſs their Thoughts, Notions and Sentiments better, than they themſelves were capable to do, eſpecially on Subjects with which they were well acquainted, and which they knew better than other Men, by reaſon of their Profound Meditation, the Purity of their Minds, and the Integrity of their Lives. Theſe very things (if divine and immediate Inſpiration will not be allowed them) could qualifie them to teach the Nature and Acts of a Holy Life, or true Righteouſneſs far better than others. All the Heathen Philoſophers came ſhort of their Perfection, and therefore are not ſo good Maſters of Morality: for *Moral Truths* are not like *Mathematical ones*, to be learned by Reading and Study: The Knowledge of thoſe comes beſt, nay, can only be had by ſerious and continued Practice. A good Man Unlearned, has a deeper ſenſe of Chriſtian Morality, and can diſcourſe more lively and reaſonably of it, than the greateſt Scholar, who has only the Theory. And there be ſome Expreſſions which ſeem mean and ſilly to the laſt, which the other feels to be juſt and Emphatick; as what that Man eſteems lofty and Sublime, this Man Undervalues; for the one knows and thoroughly underſtands the Subject he ſpeaks of, which the other does not. To return, all the Diſciples of any Sect, reverence the Authors and Founders of them, and love to ſpeak in their Language, and according to their Dialect. An Ariſtotelian will huff, and grow very angry, if the *Cant* of his Schools be mocked; and the well-bred Carteſian will not be much more calm and eaſie, when the Terms and Principles of his Philoſophy are played upon. Now ought not Chriſtians to be much more tender of the

the Divine Phraſes which the Prophets and Apoſtles have uſed to ſet forth the Secret and Sublime Principles of that Life, which renders us acceptable to God, and makes us to be reputed Righteous in his ſight? Which Phraſes were neither blindly hit upon, nor affected to amuſe, but wiſely choſen as moſt proper; becauſe both clear and comprehenſive. Therefore to mock *Faith*, and to turn *Believing* into Ridicule, to explode the Phraſe, and pretend to give better, is inſufferable Inſolence, and a high Affront to the Apoſtles, and Prophets, and that Spirit which did inſpire them. Chriſtians ought to reſent this: to bear with *it* is not Meekneſs; but want of Zeal and Courage; it is a lazy treachery, as when one beholds the Rights of his Country or Society invaded and betrayed, and yet holds his Peace. It does not become the Children of the Family to aſſume the Liberty, or rather licentiouſneſs of Enemies and Aliens, and if the Wantonneſs of their Humour prompt them to it, it is their Duty who have the Charge of the Family, to Chaſtiſe them into better Manners.

ESSAY II.

Of Faith as Oppoſed to Doubting.

1. WHatever regard be due to *Words* and *Phraſes*, there is a greater due to the ſenſe and meaning of them. Men are no better than *Parrots*, if they utter words and do not underſtand them. The next thing therefore to be conſidered is, what is *this Faith* which the Juſt ſhould live by, which is ſo much magnified and ſpoken of in Scripture, which is now, and which is ſaid always to have been the Principle of a holy and ſpiritual Life.

2. In order to this, I reſolve not either to conſider the *Definitions* of others, or to give a *New one* of my own,

own, the *common Definitions* of *Faith* would hamper me too much: If I were tied to them, I could not have the freedom of my deſign, which is, to make a clear, full, and ample Deſcription of *Faith*. This is not to caſt a ſlight upon any of the received *Definitions*; which, as they are placed in the *common Catechiſms*, do ſerve well enough to point out ſome of the ſpecial and chief Acts of *Faith*, but which yet are not ſufficient to give a full or clear *Idea* of it. Nor will I attempt to amend them, or to eſtabliſh a better one; for it is not eaſie to make a good *Definition* of ſuch a very comprehenſive thing as *Faith* is: nor is ſuch a thing well underſtood by any Definition, as by taking a particular and ſeparate view of thoſe things which it comprehends. It is but a very confuſed Notion of *Grammar*, *Logick*, or any other *Science* which Youth have by the *Definitions* which are firſt taught them; they then only rightly underſtand the Nature and Uſe of theſe *Sciences*, when they have gone through them.

And as I am not to trouble my ſelf with the *common Definitions*, ſo neither will I intangle my ſelf, or the Reader, with the *ordinary Diſtinctions* of *Faith*; ſuch as *Temporary Faith*, an *Hiſtorical Faith*, a *Faith of Miracles*, &c. For tho' there be ſomething in Scripture which gives occaſion to theſe Names and Diſtinctions, yet the conſideration of them would give little light to our Enquiry, for they ſuppoſe the Knowledge of Faith which we enquire after, and are deſigned to mark out ſome certain degrees of Faith, rather than to inſtruct the Nature of it, which we mainly aim at. For my purpoſe is, by the light and guidance of Scripture alone, to ſearch out this *Faith*, which is ſo neceſſary to entitle one to be Juſt and Righteous before God, and upon which account it muſt be that St. *Paul* ſaith, *without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him*, Heb. ii. 6. And to prevent all dangerous Errour, that we may not miſtake one ſort of Faith for another, a Faith which cannot, or doth not render Juſt, for one that doth, we ſhall have ſtill in our Eye this neceſſary Relation betwixt *Faith* and *Righteouſneſs*.

3. To

3. To proceed then, In the firſt place, I find *Faith* taken in oppoſition to *Doubting:* So it is taken, *Rom.* 14. and in ſeveral other places. And in this ſenſe *Faith* is much the ſame with Conſcience, and is an *inward Conviction or Perſwaſion of Mind* concerning what is true or falſe, good and evil, lawful and unlawful. Which Perſwaſion or inward Conviction, is the firſt Rule or Standard by which one's Integrity and Uprightneſs is to be meaſured; and therefore it is as neceſſary for the Juſt to live by this Faith, as for a Square to have four equal ſides: both Texts of Scripture, and the Nature of the thing require it. The true and primitive Character of a Juſt Man is to be Conſcientious, to follow the Dictates of his Mind, and to order his Life and Actions according to what he knows and believes to be right. A Juſt Man muſt be Upright, and there is no Uprightneſs if the outward and inward-man do not keep touches, if there be no Correſpondence betwixt them, if the Mouth contradict the Heart, and the Life and Actions be diſagreeable to the inward Light and Sentiments.

This Faith is as the Eye by which we ſee and know how to order our Steps; it is as the Light to ſhew the Way in which we ſhould walk, and not to follow it, or to go contrary to it, is great Perverſeneſs, and the Character of a Wicked Man. As the Spirit is the Principle of Life, and Life of Motion; ſo this Faith is the firſt Principle of a good Life, and Men are to be reckoned good or bad as they walk according to it: He is a bad Man who contradicts it, and he is no good Man whoſe Actions do not flow from it. The Motions of a Puppet or Engine may be both Regular and Uſeful, but they cannot be reckoned Natural; becauſe they proceed not from a Principle of Life, but from Artificial Springs. So tho' one's Actions be never ſo plauſible, fair or uſeful to others, yet they are not good; nor is he, who doth them Juſt, if they proceed from any other principle than this Faith, that is, an inward Perſwaſion of their being juſt and good, lawful and reaſonable, *for whatſoever is not of Faith* (ſaith the Apoſtle)

Apoſtle) *is ſin*, Rom. 14. 23. Hence it is that we ſee ſome in Scripture branded with the Character of ill Men, and others denied the Approbation of being good, whoſe Actions were outwardly good and commendable, becauſe they did what they did, for other Reaſons, and upon another account, than the intrinſick goodneſs of thoſe things, or their own Perſwaſion of it.

4. All the Actions of every one are to be Approved or Condemned, with a regard to this Faith, and by vertue of it, things, in themſelves good and lawful, become evil, and what is evil loſeth a part of its malignity. Thus the *Eating of Fleſh*, which in it ſelf is a lawful and innocent Action, is a damnable Sin to him who has the leaſt doubt whether it be lawful; and what is clean turns unclean to him who thinks it ſo, as is excellently diſcourſed in that fore-cited Chapter. So on the other hand, we find God himſelf excuſing *Abimelech* for taking *Sarah* into his Houſe, becauſe *he did it in the integrity of his heart*; that is, he was ignorant of her being another Man's Wife. And St. *Paul*'s Perſecution of the Saints was the more pardonable, becauſe he verily thought he ought to do many things againſt the Name of Jeſus: *I was before* (ſaith he) *a blaſphemer, and a perſecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy, becauſe I did it ignorantly in unbelief*; that is, without Faith, or the perſwaſion of the evil of it, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13.

But then it is to be remembred, That this Faith which hath ſuch Influence upon our Actions, and which is ſo Eſſential to a Juſt Man, is not Fancy or Imagination, nor a light or haſty Perſwaſion. *Let every man be fully perſwaded in his own mind*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *ver.* 5. and therefore our Faith and Perſwaſion ought to be well-grounded, the effect of ſerious Enquiry and Deliberation, that it may give true and certain Direction, otherwiſe it may be ſtill ſaid that we are regardleſs of Right and Wrong, Truth or Falſhood, Good and Evil, which is inconſiſtent with the Character of a perfectly Juſt Man. A wiſe Architect doth not work at random, but

by

by Plumb and Rule; but then he is firſt careful that his Plumb and Rule be right and exact; for without this, he cannot ſincerely intend to have his work perfect. So a Juſt man carefully ſtudieth both a Conformity betwixt his Actions and his inward Sentiments, and betwixt theſe and truth, and the ſtable Rule of Right and wrong, Good and Evil. To act contrary to inward Conviction is to offend wilfully, and the height of Wickedneſs; but it is the next degree to it to be careleſs whether we offend or not, whether we do Good or Evil, which we are guilty of, when we are not at any pains to adjuſt our Perſwaſion to Truth, to know the right, or to inform our ſelves of what is good, lawful, and fit to be done. The ſame reaſon which makes it Juſt, and our Duty to act according to our Knowledge, and inward Perſwaſion, or to do the Good we know, obligeth us to ſearch out the real Good that is, that there may be no Errour in our Perſwaſion, nor Crookedneſs in our Practice; and then only our Thoughts can juſtifie our Actions, when, by Diligence and due Care, we have endeavoured to make our Thoughts juſt and true, conform to the Nature of things; for without this, we cannot be *fully perſwaded in our Minds*, as the Apoſtle enjoineth; the aſſurance of Faith is wanting, which is neceſſary to diſpel all doubts, and to eſtabliſh our goings. *Happy is he* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *that condemneth not himſelf in that thing which he alloweth*, Rom. 14. 22. by which he gives us to underſtand, that our Heart muſt approve our Actions; our Minds muſt Judge, that the ways we take are right, otherwiſe we ſtand Self-condemned. Now the Judgment is not Juſt which is not certain, which is raſhly or haſtily pronounced, before a ſtrict Examination, or a due Attention to all the Proofs and Evidences which can be brought for clearing the Cauſe. There is ſtill place for Doubting, when neceſſary Caution and the proper Means have not been uſed for right and ſufficient Information. And as Doubting defileth the Man, and polluteth all his Actions, ſo it is uneaſie to the Mind:

Mind: As Darkneſs, in which when one walketh, it maketh him Apprehenſive, full of Fears and Jealouſies, going forwards and backwards, to the right and left, without any ſteady courſe; becauſe he has no certainty of his way. What is tranſlated a *Double-minded Man*, ought to be a *Doubtful Man*, one that has not the aſſurance of Faith; and ſuch an one (ſaith St. *James*) *is unſtable in all his ways, he wavereth like a wave of the Sea, which is driven with the wind and toſſed*, Jam. 1. 6, 8. Fleeting and Inconſtancy, change of Opinions and Practices, regarding Events and outward Advantages, is at leaſt a ſure ſign and evidence that the Perſon has not attained to a true Faith, or full Perſwaſion of his Duty, of what is good, lawful, or neceſſary; for Faith gives a chearful confidence, it makes one conſtant, and to be always the ſame; becauſe Truth and the Nature of things change not.

To conclude this Matter; By *Faith* here we are to underſtand a true Knowledge of the Nature of things, a clear Conviction of Truth, and a hearty full Perſwaſion of Good and Evil, Lawful and Unlawful, which every one ſhould endeavour after as much as poſſible: And alſo every one ought to live anſwerably to the meaſure which he hath attained of it. Who doth thus, ſo far he is to be reckoned Good and Juſt; for he hath no Perverſeneſs in his temper, no crooked Byaſs in his Conſtitution, but ſheweth an Integrity of Mind without guile or hypocriſie, and a regular Will, which offers no Prejudice, but which renders to every perſon and thing what is due.

6. Righteouſneſs begins here: A tendency towards this Faith is the firſt Symptom and Appearance, as well as Motion, of a Juſt and Good Life, which like the Natural, upon its firſt Production, may be weak and languid; but which, like it too, groweth if it be not ſtifled: and as it groweth, ſo it acquireth ſtrength and vigour, until it arrive at Perfection. The firſt moments of the Morning are hardly diſtinguiſhed from black

black Night; but it creepeth on inſenſibly, until the whole Hemiſphere be enlightened. So *the Paths of the juſt* (ſaith *Solomon*) *are as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more until the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18.

ESSAY III.

Of Faith as oppoſed to Atheiſm, and how a belief of the Exiſtence of God, is neceſſary to Determine the certain Rule of Moral Actions.

1. TO go on with *Faith*, which in the Second place is oppoſed to *Atheiſm*, and ſo it is a *firm Belief of the exiſtence of a Deity*, a certain, full, and clear Perſwaſion that God is, and a ſenſe of thoſe Attributes which are neceſſarily included in the true Idea of God. *He* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *who cometh to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 4. 6.

2. The Faith, ſpoken of in the former Eſſay, obligeth to enquire after this; and this we are now upon, enforceth the reaſonableneſs and neceſſity of that; ſuch is the relation betwixt them, and ſo mutually do they ſupport one another. Not to *Criticize Grammatically* upon the words [*Lawful, and Unlawful*] which ſuppoſe a Superiour, even Good and Evil depend much, if not altogether, upon the Knowledge of God, and are to be meaſured by a Relation to him: the Nature of theſe will be found to vary very much, according as the Exiſtence or Non-exiſtence of a Deity is eſtabliſhed. If Man have no Superiour, none to reward or puniſh his Actions, then I ſuppoſe the Government of himſelf is Arbitrary, as the chuſing Employments is now thought to be; his chief buſineſs is to pleaſe himſelf; and conſequently, Good and Evil are only to be conſidered with relation to one's

ſelf and his preſent Intereſt; which ſhall make as many different notions of Good and Evil, as there are different Humours, Inclinations, and Intereſts among Men. Good and Evil ſhall in that caſe have no certain Standard by which to be meaſured, but ſhall be of as mutable a Nature, as Honeſty and Diſhoneſty in a divided Common-wealth, where the ſame thing is both Honeſty and Knavery, in the Judgment of the different Parties, and where the ſame Perſon ſhall be both reputed a Hero and a Villain. Then no act can leave a guilt, and better or worſe, well or ill done is to be meaſured by the Event and Succeſs. And tho' Moral Laws can be ſhewed to have a Foundation in Nature, yet the tranſgreſſion of them, for a particular Pleaſure or Conveniency, will be thought no more culpable than to level a Mountain, to cut the courſe of a River; to force Water to aſcend, and ſuch like, which ſeem to be equal Violences to Nature; ſo that he who has a Liberty to do the one, may alſo do the other.

But the caſe is quite altered, if there be a God, for then we are no more at our own diſpoſal than Servants: He who made us, has an abſolute dominion over us; and all our care ought to be to pleaſe him: His Will is a Law, and the perpetual Standard of Good and Evil.

3. However it is certain, that, (according to Scripture) none are reckoned Juſt or Righteous, but ſuch as act with a continued regard to God, which ſometimes is expreſſed by the *fear of God*, ſometimes by *walking with him*, or *before him*, and having the *heart perfect or upright with God*. When *Hezekiah* pleaded his Integrity, it was in theſe words, *Remember, Lord, how I have walked before thee with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight*. Upon this account, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Lot*, *Joſeph*, *Joſhua*, *Job*, and all the other Worthies in Scripture are put into the Catalogue of the Juſt. And granting that there is a God, it will neceſſarily follow that he only is a Juſt Man, who ſets God before him, who makes him the end and meaſure of his Actions, and the

the very deſign of whoſe Life is to pleaſe God: Nor can there be a more proper Character of an Unjuſt Man, than that by which the Wicked and Ungodly are deſcribed in Scripture, Viz. *They have not the fear of God before their Eyes, God is not in all their thoughts, they are without God*; that is, they have no conſideration of him, nor regard unto him. He is not Juſt who doth not render to every Man what is due. If one keep ſquares with others never ſo well, if he deal never ſo fairly with them, yet if he, at the ſame time, be untowardly, or undutiful to his Parents, he cannot properly be called Juſt. So let one poſſeſs all that is called Vertue towards Men, yet if God have not due Acknowledgment from him, that Man is neither Juſt nor Righteous. Nay, as he is not a good and faithful Servant, who does not ſincerely intend his Maſter's Honour and Intereſt in all he doth; ſo, (according to the Scripture) none can claim the titles of Juſt or Righteous, or have them beſtowed upon them, who do not all for God's ſake, whoſe chief Motive to do Good and forbear Evil is, becauſe the one is acceptable to God, and the other offenſive to him.

4. Wherefore thoſe Divines are much to be cenſured, who recommend Morality, and a good Life chiefly by other Topicks than theſe: for they are either ignorant of the Principles and Philoſophy of the Scripture, or they diſcard the ſame to eſtabliſh a better, and more plauſible Scheme of things. They who profeſs to believe the Divine Authority of the Scripture, ought alſo to think that they are incapable to correct its Principles, or to eſtabliſh what is more Juſt, or Wiſe; and that they cannot better ſhew their Learning and Judgment, than by making it appear that they fully underſtand the Scope and Doctrine of the Scripture. But whatever Opinion they have of the Scripture, ſeeing their Profeſſion obligeth them to teach it, they ought to do it candidly; that is, without mixing their own Fanſies and Opinions. If one was appointed to read a Lecture of either Ariſtotelian, or Carteſian Philoſophy, he could not be ſaid to

execute his office with ingenuity, who did not repreſent them purely according to their Authors, but who did blend them with other Principles. A righteouſneſs built on the Principles of Self-love, Honour, Conveniency, Pleaſure, and ſuch other Motives, is a Righteouſneſs built on a Heathen Foundation, which cannot pleaſe God, no more than we do think our ſelves obliged by Acts and Deeds, which had no regard to us. I would not be thought by this to exclude all reſpect to our Private and Perſonal Intereſt; nor yet to diſprove a humble and modeſt Enquiry into the reaſonableneſs or excellency of the Divine Laws: But as the ſureſt Proof, the cleareſt and ſhorteſt Demonſtration of this, is drawn from the Exiſtence, Nature, Will, and Authority of God; Juſt as we beſt underſtand the Wiſdom and Reaſons of a Government, by conſidering what the King is, and what he propoſes to himſelf. So the only deſign of this Enquiry ſhould be to encourage our Obedience, to render it more ready and chearful, by convincing us, that he, who has the Authority over us, employs it moſt for our Advantage, that ſo the Servitude, which we owe by Nature, may become voluntary, that we may be incapable of revolting: and tho' we could be free, yet we may chuſe rather to be Servants for ever, like that Servant under the Law, who gave his Ear to be bored thorow, preferring (out of love to his Maſter) perpetual Bondage to his Freedom.

I know not whether it ſhould move Indignation or Pity moſt, to ſee how pleaſantly Men delude themſelves with Suppoſitions of Mankind; their ſtarting up free without all obligation, except to conſult their own Pleaſure and Convenience. Some, who make theſe Suppoſitions, deny a Deity, and proceed without any Conſideration of God. Others own a Deity, but they found our Obligation to him only on his poſſeſſing Wiſdom, Reaſon and Knowledge in greater meaſure. But this ſtate of Nature is a Dream and meer Romance, and all their Suppoſitions are wild, extravagant, againſt Reaſon

ſon and Nature, if Mankind had another beginning, if we all owe our being to another; for then we are not free, our Creation ſubjects us to him. We ought in the firſt place to regard his Will, which is a Law of indiſpenſible Obligation, not by vertue only of the reaſonableneſs of it, or the conveniency it brings with it, but by vertue of the Authority enjoining it. He is an open Rebel who has no regard to this Authority at all, and he, who preferrs any thing to it, or has any other thing in greater conſideration, has broke the firſt and greateſt chain of Juſtice; he is not truly Loyal, but waits an opportunity to revolt. Tho' Rewards and Puniſhments be propoſed, yet they are not intended for weakening the Authority of the Supream Lord; but to preſerve it from contempt, and to heighten our regard for it. Which Rewards we ought to conſider, and have always before us, both that we may know the Nature and Importance of thoſe things to which they are annexed; and alſo, that by them we may be the more capable to ſerve and glorifie God, to whom we owe infinite Service, if it were in our Power.

ESSAY IV.

The Exiſtence of God is moſt Evident.

FRom what hath been ſaid it neceſſarily follows, that the firſt Principle of true Righteouſneſs, the Foundation of all Morality and Religion, is this *Faith* by which we firmly believe *that God is*, and that we derive our Life and Being from him; that he Rules and Governs the World; and that he is a *Rewarder of them who diligently ſeek him.* This comprehends all; and all other things are but Deductions from this. Shake this, and all falls to the Ground; the whole Fabrick of Religion and Morality ſhivers into pieces. But then this cannot

be ſhaken: It ſtands like a Rock, immoveable, notwithſtanding of all the furious blaſts of inſolent Men in the ſeveral Ages of the World; and perhaps, never any of the former made ſo many, or ſo violent attacks as this preſent. This Foundation is ſurer than that of the World it ſelf; for when the Foundation of the World ſhall be overturned, this ſhall ſtand ſure to all Eternity, as it was before the Foundation of the World it ſelf was laid.

1. And as it is ſure and certain, ſo it is clear and evident. This is not a Truth which lies hid, or myſteriouſly wrap'd up, which requires depth of Judgment, vaſt Learning, aſſiduous Study, and great Pains to the digging it up: We may come at this, without undertaking long and dangerous Voyages, without the wearieſome Study of Languages, without turning over many Volumes, without the trouble of conſulting all the Wiſe and Learned, and collecting their Sentiments. This lies open to every Man of common Senſe and Judgment, becauſe it is what every Man ſhould know, believe, and underſtand. The Neceſſaries of Life are common every where, and may be had in every Country by a reaſonable Induſtry, which is no ways uneaſie. What muſt be fetch'd from afar, with much expence and labour, doth rather pleaſe Fanſie, than ſerve Nature: So they are only *Indian Trifles*, for amuſing and ſuſtaining a vain Curioſity, which for the moſt part are returned to us by the Laborious Travels of Learned Men. And tho' they produce alſo things Subſtantial, to give ſolid Delight and Satisfaction; yet even of theſe it muſt be ſaid, that they are not abſolutely neceſſary to give us Wiſdom and Knowledge, to eſtabliſh this Faith, which is the Ground-work and Foundation of all. What is neceſſary and ſufficient for this, is obvious and at hand, that all may be without excuſe; for which cauſe I may apply theſe words of Moſes, *This is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou ſhouldſt ſay, who ſhall go for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it.*

Neither

Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou ſhouldſt ſay, who ſhall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it; but this word of Faith is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou mayſt do it, Deut. 30. 12. That is, the Evidence of this Faith depends not on the knowledge of what is tranſacted in theſe upper Regions, nor on what paſſeth in the remote Parts of the World; but the Evidence of it lies in every Man's own Boſom: His own Mind (if he hearken to it) can make him conſcious of this Truth: That thing within him (whatever it be) which makes him ſenſible of other things, can convince him of this.

2. Becauſe I intend to ſpeak intelligibly to all, what the meaneſt Capacity may comprehend, I will not run into the Philoſophical Debate about *innate Ideas*; I will not enquire, whether all be born with an Idea of God, nor of what force that is, to demonſtrate his Exiſtence; but whether the Mind of Man come to the World void of all Notions, or prepoſſeſſed with Principles, by which it is to examine all things afterwards: it is certain, that it is capable of diſcerning things when duely ſet before it; as the Eye is capable of diſtinguiſhing objects and colours in a clear light, and at a due diſtance. If the Mind cannot refuſe an aſſent to ſome things, if upon every repreſentation of them it owns a Conviction, and cannot without violence work it ſelf into a denial; it is all a matter, whether this be from *innate Principles*, or the *natural Evidence* of theſe things themſelves. And that there are ſome things clearer and more evident than *Demonſtration* it ſelf, appears from this, that even *Mathematical Demonſtration* proceeds upon the ſuppoſition of this, and requires them as *Poſtulata*. Now the Mathematicians have only conſidered ſuch *Axioms* as relate to Lines, Figures, and Bodies: There are other *Principles* as ſelf-evident as theſe; whence comes that the Voice of Nature is Uniform, and that there is a common conſent of Mankind: Wherefore it is no *Paradox* to ſay, that the Exiſtence of God, and the Principles of Morality, is

not only as certain, but more evident than the *Propositions* of *Euclid*, because the generality of Mankind have always easily (by the very bent of their Nature) given an assent unto them, and that the greatest Barbarity and Corruption could never entirely deface them. Some Mens Genius is not capable of Mathematicks, but all are capable of Morality; and the reason of it is so plain, that every unbyas'd Mind assents to it.

That there are Debates about some Moral Principles, and particularly this of a Deity, is no more an Objection against the Evidence thereof, than the Arguments of *Zeno* against the Possibility of Motion, or the Sophistry of the Scepticks against the certainty of these things which fall under our senses. There are some things which a Child can distinguish as well as any of riper Years, and which a Country Clown may Judge of as well as a Philosopher; and consequently common Sense and Reason may be known from the one as well as the other, nay, very often better: for the one speaketh what his Mind naturally dictates, whereas the other being amused with the Notions he hath read, which his Head always runs upon; He discourseth according to these, and so perverteth his Natural Reason. The most simple Person can at first sight distinguish *Natural Things* from *Artificial*, and without hesitation, without waiting a deduction of *Logical Inferences* is presently convinced, that both the one and the other has a cause, and did not spring from themselves. None was ever so senseless as to think a House was built without Hands; and any of common sense seeth, that *Natural Things* far excelleth these of *Art*, being more curiously wrought, more admirably contrived, being more beautiful, serving to more uses; and in a word, every way more perfect. Therefore leave Men to the freedom of their own reason, they would as readily believe a God, as that a House had a Builder, or a Watch an Artificer.

3. Some will not yield that there are, or can be real Atheists; because it implies such absurdity. But we see daily

daily instances of Mens swallowing very gross Absurdities: Nay, there is hardly any absurdity which some or other has not received; which should teach the wisest to walk with fear, and to preserve their reason carefully. If there be no Atheists, some take a great deal of Pains to no purpose; for they are at much ado to perswade us that they themselves are, and to bring others to be Atheists.

But as I see no reason to doubt that there are such, tho' very much reason that there should be none. So Mens Atheism proceeds either, *1st.* From their Vitiousness, which first breeds in them a dislike of God, and then carries them to dispute his Providence, and at last his Existence. Just as they who are embarked in some Design, which makes them dread the King, first Quarrel with his Government, and then deny his right and title. Or, *2dly.* It arises from the Difficulties which they meet with in the Contemplation of his Nature and Attributes; because they cannot clear or comprehend these, therefore they deny his Being, thinking it better to deny what is plain and evident, than to own their Ignorance, or the shortness of their Reason, than which nothing can be more unreasonable, as we may have occasion to shew afterwards. Is it reasonable to deny plain and common things, because there are some things without our reach? Shall I put out my Eyes because they fail me in some particulars? because they do not reach beyond the Clouds, nor penetrate into the *Secrets of Nature?* Difficulties which are insuperable may put a stop to further Enquiries, and make it reasonable not to determine any thing positively in these Matters where we find them: but they can never make it reasonable to deny what was clearly perceived before these occurred.

Tho' the Divine Essence be incomprehensible, because infinite, and because it does not fall under our sense, tho' the ways and Workings of God be unsearchable and past finding out, yet plainer and more certain Evidences cannot be desired of united Wisdom and Power, than what we

we have continually before us; nay, carry about with us in our own ſelves. As ſoon as one caſts his Eye ſeriouſly upon them, he ſhall be convinced: He that conſiders them, ſhall acknowledge them; and therefore a Third Cauſe of Atheiſm is want of Conſideration and Reflection. Some are Atheiſts, becauſe they do not think; their Souls are always aſleep, and they never open the Eyes of their Mind to behold, by a wiſe regard, the many Prodigies of Omniſcient Power, the beautiful Scenes, the curious and admirable contrivances of Almighty Wiſdom, with which the World is filled. They are like theſe ſenſual, dull, and uninquiſitive Souls, which creep about the Palaces of Princes, on the account of the Meat and Drink, which is to be had there in plenty. They mind nothing but the crambing their Bellies, and are altogether inſenſible of the *Stately Magnificence*, the *Curious Architecture*, the *fine Sculpture* and *Painting*, which draws Strangers thither from all Parts of the World. He, who leads ſuch a life, ſhould be ſet to graze with the Beaſts, for his life is not much better than theirs, and his Soul ſeems to be altogether ſenſitive.

It is the Property of Man to think: his Dignity above the other Creatures lies in a power of diſcerning and underſtanding things, their Nature, Ends, and Uſes, their relation to each other, their cauſe and contrivance, and what elſe may enlarge the Mind with Wiſdom and Knowledge to which he bends (when free) as naturally as a Stone to the Earth. He, who does not employ his Thoughts theſe ways, abdicates the Dignity of his Nature; and he, who thus carefully maintains it, will be full of God, if I may ſo ſpeak, God will be in all his thoughts, for he ſhall ſee him every where, before him, behind him, on every ſide, and in every thing. As the fooliſh *Jews* asked a ſign of Jeſus Chriſt, when according to their Hypotheſes, and the Suppoſition of their Law and Prophets which they themſelves believed, every word he ſpoke, and every work he did was a Sign. So ſome unreaſonably demand a Proof or Demonſtration of

of a Deity, whilſt they walk in the midſt of Demonſtrations, and do tread on them every ſtep. If we cannot ſee his inviſible Eſſence, yet upon the firſt opening our Eyes, we diſcern unqueſtionable Effects of his Eſſential Attributes: And if they do not affect us, becauſe they are common and ordinary, it bewrays our want of Judgment and Conſideration; for the excellency of a thing lies not in its being rare and ſingular, but in the deſign, contrivance, and uſefulneſs. Is the Art of a Watch leſs to be regarded, or doth the Memory of the firſt Inventor deſerve leſs honour, becauſe now adays every body carries one in his Pocket; and that perhaps ſome of no great capacity are taught to work them.

Essay V.

Evidences of a Deity in Man.

1. GEnerals do not much affect us, nor are things diſtinctly known by a general view of them, we then ſee and underſtand them beſt, when we conſider each apart by it ſelf. The World is too large a Proſpect to be taken up at once; we will therefore deſcend to particulars, and ſhall begin at home. Take a view but of the outward make and figure of the Body of Man; Conſider the variety of Parts, the Symmetry, Situation and Proportion, either in reſpect to the whole, or to each other; the firmneſs of the Feet, the ſtrength of the Legs, the well-compacted thickneſs of the Thighs, the ſtatelineſs of the Trunk, the force of the Arms, the contrivance and innumerable uſes of the Hand, the comelineſs and beauty of the Face, the majeſty of the Countenance, and the ornament of the Hair. The fineſt Painters and moſt curious Statuaries think they cannot ſhew their Skill better, than to imitate theſe, and tho' the beſt imitation of them be very rude in Compariſon with the

the Original, yet even theſe rude Counterfeits have been much admired, and have procured much Honour and Fame to thoſe who made them. Now if the Copy be admired, what doth the Original deſerve? If the Picture or Statue ſhew Art and Skill, ſhall the Original be aſcribed to chance? Is it not more reaſonable to think that it is the work of ſome wiſe and excellent Hand?

2. Eſpecially if we penetrate into the Inward frame and texture, which is altogether unimitable: none was ever ſo mad as to attempt it. When the outward covering of the Skin, which alſo is admirable, being a Net of Nerves curiouſly interwoven, when this (I ſay) is laid aſide, what a wonderful Contrivance appears of Bones, Muſcles, Arteries, Nerves, and other Veſſels, which both aſtoniſh the wiſeſt, and alſo afford them matter of curious Enquiry. Since the Beginning of the World all the wiſe and curious have been prying into the Body of Man, Diſſecting and Anatomizing the Parts of it. Some have ſpent their whole life in conſidering but one particular Part; and yet after ſo many Thouſand Years, there is no perfect diſcovery, either of the whole, or almoſt of any part. There is a *terra incognita* even in this *little World*. As there are at this day better Anatomiſts than whom former Ages could boaſt off: So the moſt Skilful do acknowledge ingenuouſly, that they diſcern neither all the Parts of this admirable Machine, nor yet all the true Uſes of thoſe Parts which have been diſcovered. All the Functions of the Brain and Spleen are not yet underſtood; and it is but meer Conjecture what is ſaid of ſeveral others. Is it not then againſt common ſenſe to aſcribe to any thing but perfect Wiſdom, what is thus above the reach of the wiſeſt Men, and what puzzles them to comprehend!

3. To give further Conviction of this truth, let *Life*, *Motion*, and *Senſe* be conſidered. What admirable and exquiſite Wiſdom doth appear in the frame and diſpoſal of the *Senſes!* As in a City inveſted with Enemies, and in danger to be betrayed, it is neceſſary to advert to all

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the Motions of thoſe within, and to keep Watch at all the *Ramparts*, and other places proper for diſcovering the Advances and dangerous Approaches of the Enemy. So it is neceſſary to the preſervation of the Body, that both its outward and inward ſtate be perfectly underſtood, that all the Motions within, and all Applications without be felt, that it may be preſently known what are hurtful, and what convenient, what ſhould be cheriſhed, and what prevented; wherefore we ſee that the *Organs* of this *Senſe* of *Feeling* are poſted every where throughout the Body; ſo that the leaſt diſturbance within, and the ſlighteſt touch without, even in the Extremities, is inſtantly perceived. *Taſting* being deſigned for diſtinguiſhing Meats, and for diſcerning what is agreeable; therefore the Inſtrument of this *Senſe* is the *fore-part* of the Tongue, which lies at the very Gates of the firſt entry or paſſage to the Stomach, to ſecure againſt what is diſagreeable: For if the Faculty of *Taſting* had been placed more inwards, the diſgorging unſavoury things ſhould have been very incommodious. Becauſe all the ends and purpoſes of *Smelling* may be ſerved by *one Organ*, therefore there is no more, but that is curiouſly formed, and admirably fitted to receive the inſenſible Particles, which evaporate from all Material Subſtances, whether animate or inanimate, natural or compoſed. However the *Organ* of *this Senſe* is groſſer in Man, than in ſome other Animals, becauſe they require it far more exquiſite. For Example, If the Dog had not this *Senſe* in a nicer meaſure than Man, he would not be worth keeping; for then he could neither trace out his Maſter's footſteps, nor yet find out where the Partridge feeds, or the Hare has her Seat, which certainly never happened by Accident. If this be not Deſign, we may make Deſign and Chance all one; for it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh them.

The *two other Senſes* being by far the moſt Delightful and Profitable, therefore each has *two Organs*, moſt wiſely ſituated, and moſt admirably contrived to anſwer the purpoſes

purpoſes of theſe two Faculties. The Fabrick and Motion of the Eye is ſo curious, that never any yet did conſider it without wonder and aſtoniſhment. This is the foundation of the *Opticks*, which is the moſt pleaſant and curious part of Mathematicks. Upon which account, I muſt ſay, That if there be Mathematicians who are Atheiſts, they are of all others moſt inexcuſable: For ſeeing Viſion, and the Fabrick and Motion of the Eye, by which it is performed, is according to the ſtricteſt Rules of Mathematicks, and that he muſt be a Maſter of that Art, who can unfold the Method and Manner of Viſion, and explain the Reaſons of it. Is it not the height of Impudence? Is it not a Violence to common Senſe? Is it not to contradict and baffle Demonſtration it ſelf, either to think or ſay that Viſion was contrived, or the Eye framed without Wiſdom, or that the Author thereof was not skilled in the Nature of Light, the Rules of Motion, the Doctrine of Refraction and Reflexion, without which the Eye had been no Eye, nor Viſion ever effectuated? To ſecure this neceſſary Organ from danger, it is lodged in a well adapted *bony Orbite*; and becauſe only a Body of a Spherical Figure can move eaſily within another, eſpecially when the whole ſpace is to be filled up, therefore the Eye is Spherical, which is the only Figure capable of thoſe many Motions which are neceſſary for diſcerning the various Objects which ſurround us; and both to facilitate theſe Motions, and for performing them rightly, it is tied by various Muſcles, interwoven with many Nerves; by the means of which, it moves up and down and to either ſide eaſily. Theſe Muſcles are alſo ſo ſituate, that one is a kind of curb to the motion of the other, leſt the Eye ſhould be in hazard of being renverſed: Moreover, they ſerve to keep the Eye fixed upon Objects, as long as there is occaſion to look at them. The Eye-lids are not only for a cover when we are aſleep; but alſo they ſerve to clean and clear it by their Motions, which could not be ſo ſafely done by the Hand. As the Eye giveth Life and Beauty to the Countenance, and diſ-

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covers the inward Thoughts and hidden Temper both of Body and Mind; ſo nothing could have been more admirably contrived for Viſion; being compoſed of various humours contained in different Coats. The *Cornea* or *White* is convex, and receiveth different degrees of Convexity, according as the Objects are far or near: and to render it capable of changing its Figure thus, the humour next to it is thin, liquid, and pliable, which is therefore called *Aqueous*. The *Pupilla* or *Sight* doth dilate and contract it ſelf as there is more or leſs Light. And becauſe various diſtances of Objects require different Poſitions of the *Criſtalline humour*, through which the Rays of Light paſs to the *Retina*, where they form the Image of the external Object: For Rays from a nearer Object unite at a greater diſtance than thoſe which come from an Object more remote; therefore the *Criſtalline humour* is preſſed upon the *Retina*, by what Anatomiſts call *Ligamentum Ciliare*, and yet it is kept by the *Vitrious humour* at ſuch a due diſtance as is neceſſary for uniting the Rays exactly upon it. And that the Image of the Object, which is formed upon the *Retina*, may not be diſordered by a Reflexion of the Rays which paſs through it, therefore the *Choroides* or coat which ſurrounds it, is tinctured black, which colour doth not reflect any Rays; for if it were of another colour it would, and ſo hinder a diſtinct Viſion of external Objects. The *Retina*, upon which the Image of all external Objects is formed, is not above an inch and a half; and yet without Calculation or conſulting Experience, or Arithmetical Tables of Proportion, we are made to perceive all Objects diſtinctly in their juſt and real Proportions and at their true Diſtances, which is a moſt wonderful Contrivance, altogether impoſſible without infinite Power and Wiſdom, as both this and ſome other particulars of Viſion are inexplicable by humane Reaſon.

Nor is the *Ear* leſs curious than the *Eye*: Some offer to prove it more Artificial; but, Compariſons here (as in other things) are to no purpoſe. Certainly, there are

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as many (if not more) diſtinct Parts in the Fabrick of the *Ear* than *Eye*. But it not being my deſign to give an Anatomical Diſcourſe, I will not offer to diſſect it. Notice of all external Sound is given by a *delicate Membrane*, which is guarded by a *viſcous Subſtance*, leſt rude and violent Percuſſions ſhould break it. There are wonderful *Cavities* for receiving the impreſſions and beatings upon this Membrane, for reverberating them, for modifying and diſtinguiſhing them, that they may be clearly underſtood. All which can be aſcribed to nothing leſs than infinite Wiſdom, which contrived the *Eye*, to give us the moſt delightful Proſpect of the moſt pleaſant *Scenes* of the *Divine Opera*; and which formed the Ear to entertain us with the ſweet *Notes* which the moſt Melodious *feathered Chorus* Sing to the Praiſes of their Creator, and eſpecially that by theſe means our Souls, tho' ſtrictly chained to, and cloſely detained in the Body, may be capable of communicating their Thoughts to one another.

4. Which leads me to the *internal* and *intellectual Faculties*; the vaſt Capacity of the Mind, the quick and lively force of the Imagination, the incomprehenſible Storehouſe of the Memory, where Myriads of things are laid up without any Confuſion, but ranged in that good order, as a very Thought can produce them in a Moment. This is a large Subject, I dare not attempt it, leſt I be carried too far, or ſhould utter things not ſo obvious, or which might occaſion debate. I only mark the excellency and uſefulneſs of *theſe Faculties*, which every one can underſtand. It is by the means of theſe that we think, reaſon, diſcourſe, arrive at Wiſdom and Knowledge, by comparing things together, conſidering their mutual Relations, by Judging the preſent from what is paſt, by running the Effects up to their Cauſe, and by taking meaſures, both of Natural and Moral Events and Productions, from the Nature and Conjunction of Cauſes. By all which method and manner of reaſoning, we conſtantly find that *every thing muſt have a Cauſe*,

Cauſe, for *nothing can produce nothing*; nor can any thing give to another the perfection which it ſelf wants. Motion muſt have a Mover: Life muſt proceed from ſomething that Lives, and Art and Contrivance from one or other that underſtands the ſame; and conſequently the whole Syſtem of our Reaſon muſt be overturned, the firſt Principles of Knowledge rejected, and the cleareſt Perception denied, if *he who planted the Ear did not hear, if he who formed the Eye did not ſee, if he who teacheth man Knowledge doth not know.* In a word, if the Author of our Being be not infinitely Wiſe and Powerful, to which all Mankind have given their conſent; for as the Latin Orator, and ſome others have obſerved, there was never yet found any Nation or People who did not acknowledge a God.

I crave leave to add ſome few Thoughts more for evincing this.

5. One is taken from the wonderful Contrivance of *nouriſhing the Body*, and ſupplying all its Parts. Many rare Inventions have been ruined, becauſe they could not be ſuſtained or repaired: When the ſecret Springs broke, they periſhed; and what a trouble is it to uphold the Machines of Humane Contrivance, or to keep them a going? But as the Author of our Being did foreſee that our Bodies were liable to decay, and did waſte themſelves by acting and moving; ſo he has moſt wiſely provided againſt that Evil, and has laid down a wonderful eaſie Method of ſending Recruits to all the Parts, far and near; nay, even to theſe which are wrap'd up in the Heart of others, without doing prejudice to the ſurrounding Veſſels, which is by receiving a little proper Food into the Mouth, from whence after chewing and maſtigation, it is conveyed into the Stomach, where it is digeſted into a liquid Subſtance, whether by heat or acidity, or both; or by the motion of the Stomach it ſelf, we ſhall not debate. But however it be, there is a ſpeedy *Diſſolution* of what comes there, and a better *Secretion* or *Separation* of the *different Subſtances* after *Diſſo-*

lution, than can be by the moſt expert Chymiſt. Which Preparation being made, it is inſtantly diſcharged into Pipes and Canals, of different ſizes, and ſtrangely interſected, which ſupply every Part with what is neceſſary; ſo that the remote Parts are not neglected, nor the nearer ones ſooner ſupplied: all are equally provided and taken care of, and at the ſame inſtant refreſhed. When the Body is faint and feeble, ſeems to have loſt all its Spirits, and upon the point of expiring, how ſuddenly doth a little Food recover it? how ſoon is its colour renewed? and how inſtantly doth it begin to exert ſtrength and vigour? ſhould this be paſſed over becauſe common? ſhould it be ſlighted becauſe ordinary? ſhould we not regard this wonderful Device, by which our Life is maintained from Day to Day? Methinks, thoſe who are ſo well pleaſed with Eating and Drinking, ſhould thank the Contrivance. Upon this is founded the Cuſtom of asking a *Bleſſing before Meat*, and of *giving Thanks after*; and to ſay the truth, it is not only laudable, but more reaſonable and neceſſary than is commonly believed.

6. And as the *Nouriſhment of the Body* doth aſcribe Wiſdom to its Author, ſo both his Wiſdom and Power doth appear in its *Generation*. What an unlikely beginning has it? how unaccountable that an *homogeneous fluid* ſhould be the foundation of ſuch an *heterogeneous ſolid?* We are ſure it is, but how it comes to be cannot be comprehended. The manner of this Production is as much hid from our Underſtanding, as the place from our Eyes. The wiſeſt Philoſophers are but Children here; their Principles of Mechaniſm can give no light to this Affair; all they ſay, is but a heap of fanciful and groundleſs Conjectures. Nor do I believe the ſole Power of what is called Nature ſufficient; there muſt be the guidance of an intelligent Spirit, to regulate Nature, and to ſee it perform its Duty. As in a Watch, all the Wheels and Parts have a mutual dependance on each other, and do regulate one another's Motions, and cannot move without the Spring: nor this, unleſs it be wound up by ſome Hand:

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So there is a mutual dependency among the Parts of the Body: They muſt be all formed at once, and muſt all perform their Functions together, otherwiſe not any of them can act or move. The *Circulation of the Blood* is the Cauſe of *Animal Motion*, or abſolutely neceſſary to it, and the means of Nouriſhment. The Blood cannot circulate without the *Motion of the Heart*, nor the Heart move without *Animal Spirits*: Nor are *Animal Spirits* formed but by the *Circulation* and *Secretion* of the *Blood*; therefore there muſt be ſome ſupervenient Power to influence them all *ſimul & ſemel*, to breathe Life into them, and to ſet them a going. And if it be ſaid that this is now performed by the *Blood* and *Spirits* of the Mother, which circulate in the *fœtus*, yet the Argument holds ſtill againſt the formation of the *firſt Man*, without ſupernatural Aid; which makes out my purpoſe, and which is agreeable to the account we have of Man's Creation in *Geneſis*, where it is ſaid, that God *formed Man out of the Ground*, and then *breathed into his Noſtrils the breath of Life*; that is, by his Almighty Power he wrought a lumpiſh piece of Earth into that wonderful Machine of Man's Body: But the Creation and Conjunction of thoſe external and internal Parts, not being ſufficient to give it *Life* and *Motion*; he alſo afterwards inſpired this, by a ſecond Supernatural act of breathing into him. But to leave Philoſophizing, and to return to our Subject, how doth the unſuitable and improbable matter from which we proceed, argue the Almighty Power of him who contriv'd it? And was it poſſible, without infinite Wiſdom, to provide ſo wonderfully for the Nouriſhment and Safety of the Child during the Nine Months that it continues in the Womb? from which Priſon it is alſo delivered in a ſtrange manner, which merits Admiration. When all theſe things are conſidered, how much truth and force is in that divine Hymn of *David*, where he Commemorates his Generation and Production, and where he ſaith, *God hath poſſeſſed my Reins, thou haſt covered me in my Mothers Womb. I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and*

wonderfully made; Marvellous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well. My ſubſtance was not hid from thee when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of the Earth. Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance yet being imperfect, and in thy Book all my Members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there was none of them, Pſal. 139. 13, *&c. Job* alſo hath ſpoken as Philoſophically, and much more truely, than any who hath attempted to explain the formation of the *fœtus*, and that in a very few words; thus, *Haſt not thou poured me out as Milk, and curdled me like cheeſe? Thou haſt cloathed me with Skin, and fenced me with Bones and Sinews. Thou haſt granted me life and favour, and thy viſitation hath preſerved my Spirit*, Job 10. 10.

Once more let it be conſidered how admirably each Part is fitted for the uſe to which it is deſtined: And as a great many perform their Motions without our concurrence, ſo theſe external Members, which are at the command of our will, do follow our thoughts quickly and readily, without previous Preparation, or ſo much as a Minute of time intervening. Nothing is quicker than a Thought, and yet as ſoon as we will it, the Tongue ſpeaks, the Hand acts, and the Feet walk, *&c.* and all of them again ceaſe their Motion juſt as we think it; ſuch a cloſe dependence there is of theſe Members upon our Minds or Faculty of Thinking. One cannot Play well or diſtinctly upon any Inſtrument before he can diſtinguiſh the Strings, and until he learn what touches are proper to make the different Notes. But we are not taught the diſtinct and proper Muſcles, Nerves, *&c.* by which our Members move: Nor do we ſo much as underſtand how they move them, and yet all is done, as if we had a diſtinct and perfect Knowledge, and that too with the ſwiftneſs of our Thoughts; for our Thoughts and theſe Members keep pace together, if there be no obſtruction and hinderance; and if it were not ſo, we ſhould be under great Diſadvantages. I could bring ſeveral other inſtances to prove, that the Structure and Oeco-

Oeconomy of the Humane Body is a moſt wonderful and artificial Contrivance, which can be aſcribed to nothing leſs than infinite Power and Wiſdom, and conſequently that it is a Demonſtration of a Deity.

ESSAY VI.

Evidences of a Deity in other Parts of the World.

IT hath been made appear that every one of us carrieth in us, and about us, a *Demonſtration* of the *Deity*. Whenever we look upon our ſelves, we ſee him; for we read his Wiſdom and Power in our Make and Frame, in our firſt Production and daily Preſervation, and by both our external and internal Senſes.

1. But if one Evidence be not ſufficient for ſo weighty a Point, let us interrogate other *Creatures*, and they will all unanimouſly anſwer the ſame thing. We are indeed a wonderful Work, but we are not the only Work of our Maker, he hath framed other Pieces beſides; which no leſs manifeſt his great Power and unſearchable Wiſdom. It is evident that he who made us, made other things, and had both of us in his view when he made either. What ſhould be the uſe of an *Eye*, if there was not *Light*? And to what purpoſe ſhould there be *Light*, if there was no *Eye* to ſee it, nor any Creature to diſcern the Beauties which it diſcovers. He then, who formed the Eye, created the Light; and he who ordained Light, reſolved to have a Creature capable of Seeing. We cannot live without Food; nor can the Earth afford us neceſſary Food without the warm and kind influences of the Sun: that therefore there ſhould be a Sun to render the Earth fruitful, by its benign influences, could not be Chance, but Contrivance, and this proves an intelligent Being.

2. If there was but one inſtance that looked like Art and Deſign, we ſhould not lay much ſtreſs on't; we might be tempted to think that was only a lucky hit of *blind Fortune*. But we have many Thouſand inſtances in the Heavens, in the Earth, and in the Seas, in both the Vegetable and Animal World, where each Individual is not only wonderfully contrived in reference to the Ends and Uſes of its particular being; but alſo in reference to one another: for they are admirably fitted to one another, and are made to ſerve other moſt wiſely: The *Univerſal Frame* is as a huge Machine; the vaſt Orbs above, and this in which we dwell, as ſo many Wheels and ſuitable Parts, which the Artiſt hath moſt skilfully joined, that not only each may have its proper Motion eaſily, but that the particular Motion of one may be beneficial to another, and all of them ſerviceable to the general Deſign; no part can jolt out of its place, nor interfere with another. A Fleet of 500 Sail can hardly keep together without falling foul on each other; and behold thoſe innumerable and prodigious Orbs move continually in their immenſe ſpace, without rubbing, tho' they naturally gravitate towards one another, which ſhews that they are ſteered by a moſt dexterous Pilot. And was it poſſible to put ſo many vaſt Orbs in motion without Omnipotency? We may as well imagine that an Ant or Worm may cauſe an Earthquake. Certainly *the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work. Day unto Day uttereth ſpeech, and Night unto Night ſheweth knowledge; nor is there any Language where their Voice is not heard*; that is, though the ſeveral Nations of the World ſpeak with different Tongues, which makes them that they cannot underſtand each other; yet the Heavenly Bodies, by their regular and uſeful Motions, ſpeak an *Univerſal Language* intelligible to all of common Senſe, for convincing them that they are the Work and Contrivance of an Almighty and moſt Wiſe God.

3. Again,

3. Again, Let us consider the *Vegetable* and *Animal World* as a well-govern'd Common-wealth, where the People are wisely employed according to their Stations and Capacities, whose different Employments breed no Confusion, but do preserve the Order and Peace of the State, and promote its Wealth, Power, Strength and Glory. The Earth sends forth Trees, Herbs, and Plants of all Sorts for Food or Medicine, to serve the Necessities or Advantages of humane Life; and all these spring up in their proper Situation, as if planted by the Hand of some skillful Gardner, which are sorted into different Climates, to whet and encourage Industry, for engaging and securing a good Correspondence amongst Men. Animals are destined to several Uses, and are assigned to such Regions as are proper to their Nature and these Uses. Fowls have the Air to rove in; Fishes sport themselves in the Waters; and Quadrupedes walk on firm Land; Camels are allotted to *Arabia*, where there is no Water: Salvage Beasts are sent to Deserts, where they may do less Harm; and they who are mild, tractable, and useful, are kept amongst Men. Such Animals as are dangerous to others, or of less Use, are generally barren and unfruitful, whereas other Kinds do multiply in Abundance: For there would be no Living in the World if Lions, Tigres, Bears, Wolves, Foxes, and the like, were as numerous as Sheep and Oxen. And the Air should shortly be dispeopled of its feathered Inhabitants, if the Vulture, Eagle, and Hawk, could draw out Armies like the Flocks of Crows and Pigeons. Now who impos'd these hard Laws upon those Beasts and Birds of Prey? What *Pharaoh* forbad them to multiply to the Danger of the State? Is it possible that the Terrour of Man could have made them drown or destroy their Brood? Was it by the Art of Man that Foxes, Wolves, *&c.* produce all Dogs, and almost but one Bitch at every Litter, whereas other Animals bring forth Males and Females equally. Can this proceed from any, but the wise and potent Author of all things? But

to go on; the climbing Goats feed upon the Rocks; the ſimple Sheep and unweildy Oxen graze in the Valleys, and the frighted Deer are removed to range in the Woods. The fierce and undaunted Horſe is appointed for the Battle; the Ox to Labour, the Sheep for Food and Cloathing; the Hare and Partridge for Diverſion, and the Hound and the Hawk for catching them. Thus there is Uſe and Deſign to be ſeen in every Creature, nay, even in Inſects and creeping Things, which we look upon with ſo much Contempt. The very common dull Worm hath its Uſe; and leſt they ſhould be over numerous, the blind Mole is given to check them. But how uſeful is the Silk-Worm? What a Treaſure doth it yield? And how ſplendid are Men by its Labour? What might be ſaid of the Bee? Its Conduct and Induſtry are admirable; like an excellent Chymiſt, it extracts the mellous Juice from the Herbs and Flowers, but does not ſpoil their Beauty and Figure, as Chymiſts do by their Operations. It admirably compoſes Wax, which ſerves to many Uſes, and yet conceals from Mankind both the Matter and Art of that Compoſition; for it is not yet diſcovered: For they are miſtaken, who think that with which their Thighs are loaded is the Subſtance of Wax; for this is of different Colours, whereas the Combs at firſt are almoſt a pure white: And beſides, I my ſelf have obſerved ſeveral Cells in the Combs, filled with that Matter which is upon their Thighs, but for what Uſe I have not yet diſcover'd, except it be for hatching their Eggs.

4. If any Object, the Locuſt and Caterpillar; they may well as upbraid the Prudence and Policy of a State for keeping Forces, which generally are made up of very rude and inſolent People; for theſe are a Party of the Army of the Lord of Hoſts, which he ſends out at his Pleaſure, to chaſtiſe the Pride, Wantonneſs, Ingratitude, and Forgetfulneſs of Man, who is the only diſorderly Part of the Creation: He only breaks the Peace, and moves Sedition in this excellent and large Common-Wealth; and he

he does it to his own Prejudice, as generally all rebellious and ſeditious People uſe to do: But his unruly and diſorderly Behaviour is no Ground of impeaching the Wiſdom of the Almighty Head of this great Common-Wealth of the World, far leſs than the rebellious and ſeditious practiſing of Subjects is chargeable upon the Government, who oftentimes (as all Hiſtories inform us) run into it without juſt Provocation, through their own Wantonneſs or Ignorance, or fooliſh Fears, or the evil Counſel of cunning Men, who make them miſapprehend ſome things, and beguile them with a Pretence of making other things better, which in the end turns worſe. All the Diſorders in this Univerſal State, which is made up of all Creatures, proceed from theſe very Cauſes, which give Diſturbance to particular humane States. If I may be allowed to borrow a little Light from *Revelation*, when I reaſon againſt Atheiſm: The Devil or *Lucifer* being proud, and full of himſelf, became diſaffected, and turn'd Male-content; and to make himſelf a Party, he addreſſed to Man, preying upon his Weakneſs and Inadvertency, whom having once deluded, he ſtill keeps into that rebellious Intereſt, by ſuggeſting evil Thoughts, cheriſhing their Corruption and bad Inclinations.

5. Some may ſay, That this overturns all we have ſaid about Deſign and Contrivance, ſeeing it ſeems to prove a grand Miſtake in the Maſter-piece. If the World, the ſeveral Parts in it, and the Conjunction of theſe Parts be the work of infinite Wiſdom, would one have been made to diſturb all the reſt, to diſorder the whole Contrivance? Or would the Power and Dominion over theſe have been committed to one altogether unqualified and unworthy of it, as Man ſeems to be? Or muſt it be ſaid, That the contriving of vegetative and ſenſitive things was with in the Skill of this wiſe Being, but that rational things, or what is of a higher Nature, is above his Reach; and therefore he miſſed his Aim, and came ſhort of his Deſign? No, none of theſe things follow. The Almighty God would ſhew his Power and

Wiſdom

Wiſdom by the creating an Infinite Variety of Beings, endued with all Degrees of Perfections; and therefore one who was to be free, to be entruſted with the Government of himſelf, and who was to be under no other Force than that of Reaſon and Truth, nor to have any other Tyes than that of Gratitude and Intereſt, which he might know ſufficiently by the Exerciſe of his intellectual Faculties, and the Application of his Mind to what is always before him. Other things could not be left to themſelves; being endued with no Senſe or Reaſon of their own, they are ſtill guided by the Wiſdom of their Maker; and hence it is that they never ſtep aſide, but always move regularly: Infinite Wiſdom appears in all their Motions, and from this it is that ſome Creatures without Senſe, and others which have no more than Senſe, do out-do all the works of Men: Without Underſtanding they know the Rules of Architecture, the Nature and Uſes of things, and the Means of compaſſing them better than Man with all his Reaſon, and after all his Study and Application: Nay, the Perfection of *humane Art* is but a faint Imitation of what other Creatures do by that which is called *Natural Inſtinct*, which is truely the Guidance of that Infinite Wiſdom which contrived them. Mens beſt Knowledge is but Experience and Obſervation from their inferiour Creatures. And as it thus appears, that thoſe Creatures are under the Management of their Maker, whoſe Wiſdom manifeſts it ſelf in their Motions and Actings: So it is no Defect in this moſt perfect Wiſdom, that Men do not act perfectly or exactly right, becauſe they are left to their own Freedom, and the Direction of an imperfect and limited Reaſon, which yet was ſufficient, if they had adverted to the Marks and Inſtructions given them.

As by Revelation we are aſſured that Man was at firſt made upright, ſo there are Reaſons and Prints to convince us of it without Revelation. And as he is endued with Perfections above others in this part of the World, with intellectual Faculties which they want, ſo

it

it ſeems evident, that all thoſe other things were invented to be ſubject Matter for thoſe intellectual Faculties to work upon. Pictures are not hang'd up but to be ſeen, for they cannot talk together; ſo neither can Plants or Beaſts. This World therefore would have been but as a waſt Houſe; tho' richly furniſh'd, yet it would have been altogether deſolate of Inhabitants, if there had been wanting one of Underſtanding and Judgment, and capable of making wiſe Reflections on what there is in it. Man's Life would be very miſerable if he had not the Service of thoſe other Creatures, and they would be uſeleſs if it were not with a Reſpect unto him. Either they were deſigned to adminiſter into him, or he was made to receive the Advantage which redounds from them: They are excellently fitted to one another, which could only proceed from an intelligent Being of infinite Wiſdom and Power.

Thus there are ſo many and ſo great Inſtances of Deſign and Contrivance, that no thinking Man is able to reſiſt this *Faith* in God. He who doth not admit this Faith, muſt be ſtrangely ſtupid, and ſo much to be pitied, or unreaſonably obſtinate, and therefore exceeding cenſurable.

6. I would ask ſuch Perſons what they would be at to ſatisfie them? Do they require a Sight of God? They may as reaſonably ask to ſee a Voice, to touch a Tune, or to try the Objects of one Senſe by another, as Colours by the Ear, and Odours by the Eye. Will they deny the intellectual Faculties of Perception, Judgment, Ratiocination, Memory, *&c.* to be in others, becauſe they have no immediate Intuition of them? Is it not ſufficient Demonſtration, that this, or the other Man doth poſſeſs theſe Faculties, when the one or the other ſheweth the proper Signs of them, and that the neceſſary Effects thereof may be perceived in his Diſcourſe and Actions? And what greater Demonſtration would any have of an Almighty, Intelligent Being, than prodigious and infinite Inſtances of Wiſdom and Power, ſuch as the World every where preſents us with! God's Eſſence is inviſible,

ble, at leaſt to us. What Organs the Angels of Heaven have for beholding him, we do not know; but *he dwelleth in a Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath ſeen, nor can ſee.* But that which *may be known of God is manifeſt, for he hath ſhew'd it; for the Inviſible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and God-head; ſo that they are without Excuſe,* viz. who doubt or deny a Deity, or who are not perſwaded of his Eternity, Power, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and who doth not glorifie him as ſuch.

7. If God was not eternal, nothing could have been made, for there was then nothing to have produced any thing; therefore his eternal Exiſtence is evidently proved by the Exiſtence of other things, which do not exiſt *neceſſarily:* And there is not any thing but himſelf which has *neceſſary Exiſtence* included in its *Idea.* And though the creating of any one thing was a Demonſtration of his Almighty Power and Wiſdom, becauſe nothing leſs could produce any thing out of nothing; yet he hath created innumerable things of vaſtly different Natures and Properties, that by this infinite Diverſity and Variety of Beings, his infinite Power may be viſible to thoſe who are capable to perceive it. The Immenſity of his Power appears in the Immenſity of the World, to which our very Imagination can prefix no Limits. * The Length

* *By the lateſt and exacteſt Calculation of the Modern Mathematicians, there goes* 69 *Miles and a Tenth Part to a Degree, ſo that the Periphery or Circumference of the Earth is* 24876 English *Miles. Its Diameter is* 7915, *and the whole Solidity may be reckoned Two Hundred Fifty Nine Thouſand Five Hundred Seventy and Eight Million, Nine Hundred Thirty Three Thouſand Four Hundred and Five Cubical Miles. The Earth is greater than* Mercury, *or* Mars; *for the Firſt bears only the Proportion to it, which an* 100 *hath to* 347, *and the other of an* 100 *to* 334; *That is, the Earth is more than three times greater than any of theſe: But then it is much leſs than the reſt of the Planets; for in reſpect of* Venus, *the Earth has only the Proportion of* 43 *to an* 100, *to* Jupiter *as* 121 *to* 10000, *to* Saturn *as* 296 *to* 10000, *and to the* Sun *as* 1 *to* 1367631.

The Magnitude of the fixed Stars cannot be conjectured; but there are Demonſtrations offered to prove them greater than any of the Planets; ſeeing they ſhine ſo bright at almoſt ſtupendous Diſtance: For a Teleſcope which multiplieth 200 *times, doth not ſhew them bigger than they appear to the naked Eye, but rather leſs. Whence it follows, That this planetary Orb is but as a Point, in reſpect of the Diſtance of the fixed Stars; and conſequently, That the Univerſe which comprehends the Planets and all the Stars, viſible and inviſible, each of which has a particular Orb, muſt be Immenſe beyond all Imagination and Apprehenſion.*

and

and Greatneſs of the Earth, with the vaſt deep, doth aſtoniſh us when we have it in our View; but how little doth this Greatneſs appear, when we lift up our Eyes to the Heavens and behold the innumerable Multitude of thoſe ſhining Orbs, Two of which, *viz.* in the Panetary World, are only leſs than the Earth; and ſome of them, not only many Thouſands, but Millions of times greater, as we are aſſured by the Authority and Obſervation of Mathematicians, and which, without them, we may rudely conjecture by their Appearance at ſo vaſt a Diſtance: By the help of Glaſſes we may diſcern many more Stars, than what appear to the naked Eye. And there be very good Reaſon to believe, that there are many more which Glaſſes cannot reach; ſo that Imagination it ſelf cannot graſp the Univerſe: And all our perceptive Faculties fail us when we offer to view the Extenſion of it. *Lo, all that we ſee are but Parts of his Ways, for how little a Portion is heard of him*, ſaith *Job*, chap. 26. 14.

8. How theſe celeſtial Orbs are filled and furniſhed, we know not; but we have very good Reaſon to believe, That they are not waſt and deſolate Places, or meer *Maſſes of Matter* to fill up the immenſe Space of *Vacuity*. Without doubt they are admirably repleniſh'd by his Almighty Wiſdom, as well as this which is inhabited by us, where are infinite Diverſity of Inſtances, for forming and enlarging in us an Idea of the God-head, and to convince us that his Wiſdom and Power cannot be bounded. In one Place Matter lies heaped in *looſe Particles* as Sand, which can be eaſily ſeparated, nay, blown aſunder: In another Place it is kneaded like *Dough*, we know not how, as in *Clay* and ſuch like Ground: Again, it is both cloſely united, and alſo hardned wonderfully, as *Stone*, of which there are divers ſorts, ſome of a bright and dazzling Luſtre, as the *Diamond* and *Cryſtal*; other altogether Black, or of an unſpotted White, or admirably variegated with different Colours, as the ſeveral ſorts of Marble. Sometimes this hardned Matter is combuſtible, as *Coal*; ſometimes malleable, as *Metal*, which may

may be beat ſo thin, that a very ſmall Quantity of Gold could be made to cover the whole Surface of the Earth, as can be demonſtrated from *Leaf-Gold*, and the drawing of *Gilded-Wire*; for a Grain Weight or two may be extended to ſome Thouſand Ells of Length. Thus the Power of God doth wonderfully appear in the very Diſpoſal of the *Atomes* and Particles of *Brute* and *Lifeleſs Matter*, which alſo ſheweth his Wiſdom no leſs; for by this means, Matter is made to ſerve to many different Uſes and Purpoſes, which otherwiſe could only have ſerved one or a few. Convenient Houſes, ſtrong and magnificent Buildings, could never have been erected of *Sand* and *looſe Duſt*, nor could *Stone* be beat out into uſeful Plough-Shares and Pruning-Hooks, Swords and Knives, and ſuch other Inſtruments as the Conveniency of Life requires. Of what Advantage *Iron* is, we may underſtand by the Imperfection of Arts in *America*, before the *Europeans* carried it thither: Tho' it be commonly reckoned the courſeſt of Metals, yet none is more uſeful, and without it other things could not be ſo well managed. It ſhould be tedious to run over the ſeveral Species of *brute Matter*, but it is evident, That the wonderful Variety thereof renders the State and Condition of Mankind more convenient and happy; and if but a few of them had been wanting, they ſhould have laboured under great Inconveniencies: As for Inſtance, how inconvenient would it be for thoſe who inhabit Inland Countries, remote from the Sea, if there were not Rocks and Mines of Salt; and therefore the Contrivance of ſuch Variety, ſpeaks out both the infinite Power and Wiſdom of God.

Which doth yet more appear when we conſider *Vegetables*, which is *Matter* raiſed to the *Firſt Degree* of *Life*, being made capable of Nouriſhment and Growth. Some have written ſeveral large Volumes about the Number, Kinds, and Vertues of *Plants*, and many more might be written without exhauſting the Subject. There are many different *Genders* or Kind of Plants, and every one of

of theſe in the ſame *Gender* differ from other as to Size, Shape, Figure, Colour, Odour, Vertue, Duration, and the like; ſo that the Number of known Plants are computed to be Eighteen or Twenty Thouſand; and there may be yet many more undiſcovered. Some are almoſt inſenſibly ſmall, other vaſtly great; ſome proceed from the Seed, others by the Root; ſome bear Seed, others none at all; ſome ſend forth a Flower, others are without it; in ſome the Flower puts out firſt, in moſt others it is laſt; ſome have no Odour, others either refreſh with their Fragrancy, or they offend with their Stink; ſome are only commendable for their Beauty and Ornament, as the Tulip, others for their Uſe and Vertue; and ſome have Beauty and Vertue enjoined, as the Violet, the Roſe, the Lily, and the Gilly-Flower. Some wither almoſt as ſoon as they ſpring up others laſt a Seaſon; ſome are Annual, and others perpetual; and all theſe divers Kinds have one common Nouriſhment, *viz.* the *Rain* and *Dew* from Heaven. What Admiration may it breed, to conſider that ſuch an inſipid thing as *Rain-Water*, is capable to be diſtilled into Liquors of ſo many different Colours, Taſts, Smells, and Vertues, as are the Juice of Plants! And it is no leſs Matter of Admiration, that this ſame liquid Rain ſhould be conſolidated into ſo firm, hard, and ſtrong Parts, as are the Roots, Trunks, and Barks of Trees: For their Accretion and Growth is only from Rain, the Earth, being only a fit Receptacle to preſerve it for them, as is evident from divers Experiments. Is not all this the wonderful Work of God, of which who can make any doubt? If the inward Structure and admirable Mechaniſm of Plants or Vegetables be conſidered; for they are compoſed of different Parts, wiſely fitted for Nouriſhment, Growth, and Preſervation: The Root fixeth it in the Earth, ſucks in Nouriſhment, and is as the Stomach in Animals, to digeſt and prepare it. Then there are various Fibres as Veins to receive the Sap, and thro' which it circulates. There are alſo ſome Veſſels to take in Air for Reſpiration, to facilitate the

the Circulation of the Sap. The outer and inner Bark of Trees preſerve them from the Injury of the external Air: The Leaves are not only for Beauty, but to defend the Fruit, and to ſhade the Tree it ſelf from exceſſive Heat, and to gather the Dew, which returning with the inward Sap, helps to nouriſh the Fruit and Branches. Every Vegetable has its peculiar Contrivance ſuited to its Nature and Uſe; which abundantly demonſtrates that they are all the Effects of infinite Power and Wiſdom: But there are ſome more remarkable Inſtances, which, like ſtrange Prodigies, ſeem to be planted with a Deſign to force our Admiration and Acknowledgment. Take this ſhort Account of them, which Mr. *Ray* hath given in his ingenious and pious *Treatiſe of the Wiſdom of God in the Creation.*

"*Firſt*, The Coco or Coker-nut-Tree, that ſupplies "the *Indians* with almoſt whatever they ſtand in need "of, as Bread, Water, Wine, Vinegar, Brandy, Milk, "Oyl, Honey, Sugar, Needles, Thread, Linen, Cloths, "Cups, Spoons, Beſoms, Baskets, Paper, Maſts for "Ships, Sails, Cordage, Nails, Coverings for their "Houſes, *&c.* which may be ſeen at large in the many "Printed Relations of Voyages and Travels to the *Eaſt-*"*Indies*, but moſt faithfully in the *Hortus Malabaricus*, "Publiſhed by that immortal Patron of natural Learn-"ing, *Henry Van Rheed van Drankenſtein*, who has "had great Commands, and employs in the *Dutch* "Colonies.

"*Secondly*, The *Aloe Muricata*, or *Aculeata*, which "yields the *Americans* every thing their Neceſſities re-"quire, as Fences, Houſes, Darts, Weapons, and other "Arms, Shooes, Linen and Cloths, Needles and "Thread, Wine and Honey, beſides many Utenſils, "for all which *Hernandes*, *Garcilaſſo de la Vega* and "*Margrave* may be conſulted.

"*Thirdly*, The *Bandura Cingalenſium*, called by ſome "*Priapus Vegetabilis*, at the end of whoſe Leaves hang "long Sacks or Bags, containing pure limpid Water,

"of

" of great Uſe to the Natives, when they want Rain " for Eight or Ten Months together.

" *Fourthly*, The *Cinnamon-Tree of* Cylon, in whoſe " Parts there is a wonderful Diverſity. Out of the Root " they get a ſort of *Camphire*, and its Oil; out of the " Bark of the Trunk the true Oil of Cinnamon; from " the Leaves an Oil like that of Cloves, out of the " Fruit a Juniper Oil, with a Mixture of thoſe of Cin- " namon and Cloves. Beſides, they boil the Berries " into a ſort of Wax, out of which they make Candles, " Plaiſters, Unguents. Here we may take Notice of the " Candle-Trees of the *Weſt-Indies*, out of whoſe Fruit " boiled to a thick fat Conſiſtence, are made very good " Candles, many of which have been lately diſtributed " by that moſt ingenious Merchant, Mr. *Charles Dubois*.

" *Fifthly*, The Fountain or Dropping-Trees in the " Iſles of *Teno*, St. *Thomas*, and in *Guinea*, which ſerve " the Inhabitants inſtead of Rain and freſh Springs.

" *Sixthly*, and *Laſtly*, we will only mention the Names " of ſome other Vegetables, which with Eighteen or " Twenty Thouſand more of that Kind, do manifeſt to " Mankind the Illuſtrious Bounty and Providence of the " Almighty and Omniſcient Creator towards his unde- " ſerving Creatures, as the Cotton-Trees, the Manyoc " or Caſſava, the Potatoe, the Jeſuits Bark-Tree, the " Poppy, the Rheubarb, the Scammony, the Jalap, " the Coloquintida, the China, Sarſa, the Serpentaria " Virginia, or Snakeweed, the Niſi or Genſeg, the nu- " merous Balſam and Gum-Trees, many of which are " of late much illuſtrated by the great Induſtry and Skill of " that moſt diſcerning Botaniſt, Doctor *Leonard Pluke-* " *net*. Of what great Uſe all theſe, and innumerable " other Plants are to Mankind, in the ſeveral Parts of " Life, few or none can be ignorant. Beſides, the " known Uſes in curing Diſeaſes, in feeding and cloath- " ing the poor, in building and dying, in all Mechanicks, " there may be as many more [not yet diſcovered, and " which may be reſerved on purpoſe to exerciſe the

"Faculties beſtowed on Man, to find out what is ne-
"ceſſary.

10. But if we make one Step higher to view the *Animal Life*, we ſhall ſee Wiſdom and Power ſtill more wonderfully diſplayed and diverſified. What a prodigious Bulk of Life and Animal Motion is the *Whale!* What a huge Animal Machine is that *Leviathan! By whoſe Neezings a Light doth ſhine, and whoſe Eyes are like the Eye-lids of the Morning. Out of whoſe Noſtrils goeth Smoak as out of a Seething-pot or Cauldron. He maketh the Deep to boil like a Pot, the Sea like a Pot of Ointment. He maketh a Path to ſhine after him, ſo that one would think the Deep to be hoary.* And is not the Epitome of the Animal Life as aſtoniſhing which we have in the *Mite*, and other almoſt imperceptible Creatures! Which tho' they be but as *Motes* in the Sun, nay according to the Obſervation of ſome, there are ſome Animals leſs than a Grain of Sand by ſeveral Millions, yet they have Life and Motion, and conſequently are inwardly compoſed of Heart, Lungs, Veins, Arteries, and Fibres, which proves the wonderful *Diviſibility* of *Matter*, and the *Art* of Almighty Power, which can produce the ſame Motions and Senſe in an *Atome* which we ſee in the hugeſt Animals. Again, we ſee here all imaginable Qualities diſtributed into various Sizes, Shapes, and Figures; and alſo, all or moſt of them united together into one. Some are deſigned to fly in the Air, and for that end are furniſhed with Feathers, Wings, and very ſtrong Muſcles, by which means they are capable to continue and ſupport themſelves a long time in the Air, without wearying: And becauſe their Feathers may be ſpoiled by Rain and Dew, and ſo rendered uſeleſs; therefore each Fowl has Two *Pots* of *Oil*, that is, *Two Glandules* upon its *Rump*, which always produce an *Unctuous Subſtance*, for anointing the Feathers that they may not be wet, or receive any Prejudice from Rain or the Moiſture of the Air. Others are framed to ſwim in the Waters, and therefore have a peculiar Structure of their Lungs and inward Parts, which makes them

them require leſs Air than Terreſtrial Animals. And tho' the Animals proper to one Element cannot live in another, for Fiſhes brought to the open Air pant and die; Land-Fowl, and the Generality of Terreſtrial Creatures, when they fall into the Water, cannot ſubſiſt long without Drowning. Yet to ſhew that nothing is impoſſible to Almighty Wiſdom, there be ſome Fiſhes framed to fly above Water, and a great many Fowl to ſwim and dive under it. So there are Terreſtrial Quadrupedes, which, without Feathers, fly in the Air, as Bats, and ſome *Indian* Squirrils; and there be others, whoſe Food being Fiſh and Water-Inſects, they range continually in the Waters, as the Beaver, the Otter, the Phoca or Sea-Calf, the Water-Rat, and Frog; all which have their Toes interwoven with a thin Membrane to fit them for Swimming, and alſo are furniſhed with a *Wind-Bladder* to afford them what Air is neceſſary to the Circulation of the Blood, ſo that they can continue long in the Water without Suffocation. Now could all theſe different proper Structures of Animals have been contrived without Wiſdom? Could they have been diſtinguiſhed in ſome, and united and intermingled in others, according to the Elements for which they were deſigned, without infinite Underſtanding?

To proceed, the Power of Seeing far is given to the Eagle and others, Swiftneſs to the Hare, Hound, and Roebuck; Strength to the Ox and Bear; Fierceneſs to the Lion; Cunning to the Fox; Docility to the Dog; Courage and Fleetneſs to the Horſe; and the Elephant is made both formidable and tame, cunning and docile, ſtrong and fierce.

And laſtly, there is Man to manage this and all the other Animals, who, tho' he be neither ſo clear ſighted as ſome, nor ſo ſtrong, nor ſo fierce, nor ſo ſwift as others, yet by his Reaſon and the Ordinance of God, he has Dominion over the Fowls of the Air, the Beaſts of the Field, and the Fiſh of the Sea, and maketh them all to do Homage unto him. *O Lord, how manifold are thy*

Works! In Wiſdom thou haſt made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches.

11. We need not aſcend higher, nor go further to fetch Proofs of a Deity, nor Inſtances of eternal and infinite Wiſdom and Power. They who are ſo peeviſh as to quarrel what they ſee here, would not lay aſide this unreaſonable Humour, tho' they were carried to the Regions above. They who are not convinced by theſe things which are continually before them, would not be ſatisfied with other Arguments, and there are innumerable more. As they are hardned againſt the ordinary Works of God, ſo they would reſiſt obſtinately ſuch as are extraordinary, for they mock all of this kind which have been. Wherefore it is wiſely obſerv'd, That God never wrought a Miracle to convince an Atheiſt; for beſides that it is not reaſonable that God ſhould indulge an unreaſonably willful, and obſtinate Humour, no Miracle can be more effectual, or leſs liable to Exception than the regular Motion of thoſe prodigious Orbs in the Heavens above, and the Multitude of Productions in the Earth below, all of which ſhew admirable Art and Contrivance. When common Food ceaſeth to nouriſh, Delicacies and Dainties ſeldom do good. If the Body be clean and ſound, common Food ſhould be both ſavoury and nouriſhing. And if Men would lay aſide their Pride, Malice, and Superfluity of Naughtineſs; if they would be meek and docile, they ſhould ſoon perceive the reaſonable Force of what we have touched, to perſwade to a Belief of the Exiſtence of God. And if any would have the Satisfaction of a fuller View of theſe Works of Wiſdom and Power, I referr them to the forementioned *Treatiſe* of Mr. *Ray*, becauſe it may be eaſily had, and is made plain and intelligible by the meaneſt Capacity.

ESSAY VII.

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Of the Abſurdity of Atheiſm.

1. THere are Two ſorts of Demonſtrations, one is a poſitive Proof drawn from certain and known Principles; the other ſheweth the abſurd and unreaſonable Conſequences which would neceſſarily follow, if what is required be not granted, which is therefore called *Demonſtratio ex abſurdo.* Mathematicians make uſe of both: And there be many Propoſitions in *Euclid* which are not demonſtrable but by the laſt Kind. Either of them makes a thing ſure; and what is capable of both is moſt evident, and conſequently nothing can be more abſurd and unreaſonable than to deny and reſiſt what is clearly made out both theſe Ways. And hence alſo it follows, That the Atheiſt is monſtrouſly obſtinate, and to the utmoſt Degree abſurd and unreaſonable; ſeeing the Exiſtence of a Deity can be demonſtrated either way.

2. *Firſt*, It is evident by what hath been delivered in the former Eſſays, that there are clear Inſtances of Wiſdom and Power in the World; and it alſo clearly appears that this Wiſdom and Power are united in one, becauſe they never act ſeparately, but always work together. Power is always directed by Wiſdom, and what ſheweth the one ſheweth the other, which is a ſufficient, full, and as great a Demonſtration as can reaſonably be demanded, of the Exiſtence of a wiſe Power or powerful Wiſdom, and conſequently that there is a Being ſuperiour to all that we ſee, which has as much Wiſdom and Power as what we find expreſſed in the Contrivance and Frame of the World, and in the Compoſition of the ſeveral Beings that are in it, that is, there is and muſt be an all-wiſe and Almighty God; for by him we underſtand a Being whoſe Power and Under-

ſtanding is infinite. Of whoſe Exiſtence we are alſo further aſſured by all the Principles of reaſon and Knowledge, and by all thoſe Methods by which we find out the Truth of any thing: For we are aſcertained of the Truth of things, either by the Conſideration of their Nature and abſtracted Idea's, or by Deductions from Principles which all acknowledge to be ſelf-evident, or by their effects and Manifeſtations, or finally by Teſtimony and Tradition. And all theſe ſeveral Ways, it is evident that there is ſuch a ſupreme and perfect Being as is meant by God.

3. Moreover, this Truth is ſo far from being ſhaken by the Arguments and Objections of Atheiſts, that they do rather confirm it. Wherefore, that we may entirely ſilence them, and remove all Difficulties which any may entertain in this Matter, we will conſider ſome of the chief of their Objections, without concealing or diminiſhing the Force of them.

Firſt, It is objected, *That an Argument, drawn from final Cauſes, the Ends and Uſes of things, is not concluding, nor of Force enough to eſtabliſh ſuch an important Truth, becauſe it has more of Fancy than Solidity in it: The ends of things are but little known, and are only deviſed by a ſtrong Imagination. Fanciſull Men apprehend a Thouſand things which have no Foundation in Nature, as cunning and induſtrious Perſons can adapt and appropriate things to ſeveral Uſes to which they were never deſtined. It is unreaſonable to pretend, that the ſeveral things in Nature have been particularly deſigned for the Ends and Uſes to which the Art or Neceſſities of Mankind have employed them. And the like may be ſaid of moſt other things, which we only fanſie were formed with a Reſpect to ſuch or ſuch an End, becauſe we perceive ſome Agreeableneſs betwixt them and it.* This Argument *Lucretius* inſiſts on, which I ſhall ſet down according to the excellent Tranſlation of Mr. *Creech*;

But now avoid their groſs Miſtakes, *that teach*
The Limbs were made for Work, *a* Uſe for each;

The

The Eyes *deſign'd to* ſee, *the* Tongue *to* talk,
The Legs *made ſtrong, and knit to* Feet, *to* walk;
The Arms *fram'd long, and firm, the* Servile Hands
To work, as Health *requires, as* Life *commands:*
And ſo of all the reſt whate'er they feign,
Whate'er they teach 'tis Nonſenſe all, and vain.
For proper Uſes were deſign'd for none
But all the Members fram'd each made his own.

Again:

Theſe various things Convenience *did produce,*
We thought them fit, and made them for our Uſe.
Thus theſe, *and thus our* Limbs *and* Senſes *too*
Were form'd *before that any* Mind *did know*
What Office *'twas that they were* fit *to do.*
Well then, 'tis fond to think that theſe began
For proper Uſes made, beſtow'd on Man.

4. The Summ of this Argument is, That all things happened by Chance, That nothing was contrived or made with Deſign, and that the pretended Ends and Uſes of things are arbitrarily impoſed by Men. But this Argument falls to pieces, and is of no Force at all, if it evidently appear that the Frame of the World, and the Structure of particular Beings cannot be aſcribed to Chance, but to Contrivance and Deſign, which muſt neceſſarily inferr an Intelligent Being: For even the Propoſers of this do acknowledge, That acting intentionally proves Wiſdom and Underſtanding, otherwiſe they would not be ſo anxious to remove all Contrivance from Natural things.

Now, neither the Continuation of the preſent State of things, nor their firſt Production can be aſcribed to Chance without the groſſeſt Impudence. Not the firſt, becauſe Chance is Chance ſtill, and not only may, but doth more often miſs than hit right; whereas the Motions of the Planets are certain and regular; and the ſucceſſive

Production of Animals and Vegetables is conſtant and unchangeable, never miſcarrying, but when ſome viſible impediment happens. The ſeveral Species are not confounded or blended together, but every thing produceth its like of the ſame kind, with all its natural Perfections and Proportions. If one ſhould always throw the ſame Number with Two Dyes, when the Odds is more than a Million to One, tho' there be but Six different Numbers on each, we would conclude that he did it not by Chance but by ſome Art or Trick which ſecured it. How improbable then, nay, how impoſſible is it, that ſo many Thouſand admirable and regular Productions ſhould happen merely by Chance, when each is a greater Chance than one againſt many Thouſands of Millions without the Management of a wiſe Power. We conclude him a wiſe and expert Artiſt, who always hits his Mark, and compaſſeth his Deſign. And is there not as much Reaſon, to conclude theſe many natural Productions the Effects of an Intelligent Being.

If it be replied, that all things now are continued and perpetuated by the Order and Method into which Matter has ſettled, and into which it fell by mere Chance; I anſwer, That neither can the firſt Production of things, or that Order and Law by which they are now produced be aſcribed to Chance, which was the other thing I aſſerted. For ſuppoſing Matter to be Eternal, we muſt alſo ſuppoſe ſome other thing to put it into Motion, for Motion is not eſſential to Matter: And tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe, that both Matter and Motion were Eternal, yet we cannot thence conclude, that blind Matter and undetermined Motion could ever produce any regular thing, without a Director, or one to ſuper-intend it. At the moſt it can be ſuppoſed only to occaſion a Separation of its Parts, and a Secretion of the ſubtile from the groſſer Particles, as we ſee done by ſome Chymical Operations; but no Force put upon our Imagination can ever make us fanſie that it could be ſo admirably organized of it ſelf, or by mere Chance ſhap'd into ſo many different

different independent Species of Beings, which have alſo Power to perpetuate their Kind, not to ſpeak now of the Faculties of thinking and reaſoning. We may with much more Eaſe conceive, that a fortuitous Jumble of Letters may compoſe all the Books of the World, which the Atheiſts have been often, and of old twitted with.

And as Reaſoning *à priori*, we cannot admit Chance to be the Cauſe of things, ſo *à poſteriori*, we cannot deny Contrivance and Deſign to be viſible in the Frame of the World, the Order of Beings, and the particular Structure of each, unleſs we do Violence to both Senſe and Reaſon. Such as refuſe to acknowledge it, I would have them to declare greater Signs and Evidence of Art, Deſign, and Contrivance, than what is to be ſeen in and amongſt natural things. Are not all things made in *Number*, *Weight*, and *Meaſure?* Where do they perceive any Confuſion or Diſorder? Where do they ſee irregular and unſuitable Mixtures or Compoſitions? Are their diſproportionable Quantities of Matter, or diſagreeable Qualities conjoined in any Subject? Is not Order, Method, juſt Proportion and Meaſure to be obſerved every where, and in every thing? Are not all things ſo exactly adapted together, and ſo well fitted to each other, that whether we conſider Individuals, or the ſeveral Species, or the whole Frame together, nothing can be better deviſed? What is it to act intentionally, or with Deſign, but to propoſe ſome certain end, and to carry it on by ſuitable Means? And therefore when we ſee things ſo conveniently adapted together as to produce certain Effects, and ſo well adjuſted as to prevent the Miſcarriage of them, have we not all Reaſon to conclude, that there is Deſign and Contrivance there? The more excellent the Effects be, and the more Artificial the Means, it ſtill proves more Wiſdom in the Author and Contriver, and conſequently the Author of Natural things is infinitely more wiſe than Men, becauſe Natural Productions do far exceed thoſe of Humane Art, and the

Means

Means by which they are produced are much more admirable.

It is great Perverſeneſs and inexcuſable Obſtinacy, not to acknowledge a wiſe Contrivance in the Ends and Uſes of Natural things, or to alledge that they are all deviſed by Men: For tho' we ſhould grant, that the Ends and Uſes to which the Wit, Art, and Induſtry of Man has improved many of them, were not foreſeen by their wiſe Author, nor thoſe things which they have thus improved, intended by him purpoſely for the greater Conveniency and Advantage of Life; yet there are real and viſible Ends and Uſes, and manifeſt admirable Contrivances in Order to the ſame, which are altogether independent upon either the Art or Imagination of Men. Is the Diſtinction of Animals into Male and Female, and the Adaptation of the Female to conceive and nouriſh the *Fœtus*, both while it is in the Womb and after it is brought forth, merely grounded upon Fancy? Could either Individuals have been multiplied, or the Kinds propagated without this? And was not this an admirable Contrivance, and could it have been without Wiſdom and Underſtanding? What Reaſon is there to aſcribe a Watch to Art and Contrivance more than the Structure of Animals, which is compoſed of different Parts and Veſſels, curiouſly ſet together? Why ſhould we think, that Windows were deſigned to let in Light to the Houſe, and not the Eye purpoſely framed to ſee? Why ſhould we think, Doors and Gates intended by the Architect for giving Entry to what we would admit into the Houſe, and ſhutting out other things, and not alſo conclude the *Valves* of the Heart, Veins, and Arteries ſuch another Contrivance? Is there more Art in the various ways of joining the different pieces of any Frame or Machine, than there is in the different joinings of the Bones of the Body, which makes them move differently and very uſefully? As for Example; The upper part of the Bone of the Arm is convex, and that Bone of the Shoulder which receives it is concave, by which Means

Means we can turn our Arm round, whereas at the Elbow there is another Kind of Articulation, which only ſuffers that part of the Arm to turn upwards towards the Shoulder. And becauſe neither of theſe joinings were proper for the divers Motions of the Hand and Fore-Arm, therefore its Bones are joined ſo as to make it capable of turning round, and of moving backwards and forwards, up and down, and almoſt every way. The Teeth are the only Bones of the Body, except thoſe of the Ear, which are not covered with a moſt ſenſible Membrane: And if they had been covered with it, we had been liable to continual Pain. Now this Difference between the Teeth and the reſt of the Bones could not be Chance, but a wiſe Contrivance. I might alſo make out this further, by conſidering the different Contrivance betwixt the Teeth of Men and other Animals, and thoſe of other Animals according to their different Natures, and by many other Inſtances. But what hath been ſaid is ſufficient to prove, That the Ends and Uſes of natural things are real and not fanſied by Men; that the Univerſal Frame and the Nature of particular things do evidently and demonſtrably prove a wiſe Contrivance; and conſequently that all things are the Effects of a wiſe and intelligent Agent. And who would be further cleared and perſwaded of this Matter, let them read the Treatiſe which the Honoured and Worthy Maſter *Boyle* has written of Final Cauſes.

5. But 2*dly*, 'tis objected, *That if it be reaſonable to conclude the Exiſtence of a Deity, or ſome ſupreme and intelligent powerful Being from the ſeeming Order and Contrivance of ſome things, it is as reaſonable to conclude that there is no ſuch being from the manifeſt Irregularity and Uſeleſsneſs of other things, for if there was a God, or any Wiſe Almighty Being, as is pretended, all his Works would bear Prints of his Wiſdom. But we ſee many things which have no manner of Contrivance in them, which are of no Uſe, but rather prejudicial, and therefore we have Reaſon to believe, that the reſt happened by Chance and not by Deſign. Thus*

(ſay

(ſay they) *the Spleen is the Occaſion of much Pain and Trouble, and is of it ſelf of no Uſe, for ſeveral Animals have been known to live without it. Mountains are irregular and ill contrived Heaps, which ſpoil the Surface of the Earth, and render it leſs beautiful, and are very inconvenient for Travelling and Commerce. If this Terraqueous Globe had been the Work of a wiſe Agent, there would not have been more Water than dry Land, which is the only proper Habitation for Man and Terreſtrial Animals, which are by much preferrable to Fiſhes: Nor would there have been ſo much Ground laid waſt which cannot be inhabited, as the Deſarts of* Arabia, *the* Lybian *Sands, and about the Two Poles*, &c.

6. To all this I anſwer Firſt, That tho' it ſhould be granted that there are many things without Contrivance, and which ſhow no Deſign, yet it would be unreaſonable to deny the neceſſary Conſequences of what doth manifeſtly ſhow both a Contrivance and Deſign; and therefore whether there be more or fewer Inſtances which do ſo, it ſtill follows that there is a Wiſe, Intelligent Being, capable to produce them. 2*dly*, We cannot without Raſhneſs conclude, That a thing is without Contrivance, becauſe we cannot find it out, nor is intended for any uſe, becauſe we cannot perceive it. Our Knowledge is very much limited, and it is impoſſible for us to comprehend all that God doth, and it is great Preſumption to condemn what we do not underſtand. No wiſe Man will ſlight the Works of any famous Mechanick or Artiſt, tho' he doth not preſently conceive what he intended by it; for his known Art and Skill in other things makes it reaſonable to believe, that what is not yet declared or underſtood was nevertherleſs well deſigned and artificially contrived: Even ſo, ſeeing the general Frame of the World doth ſhow ſo much Wiſdom, and that there appears ſo much Art and Contrivance in the Nature and Structure of particular Beings, we ought from hence to conclude, that all things are wiſely and well contrived for excellent Ends and Purpoſes, tho' we be ignorant of many of them. 3*dly*, In paſſing a Cenſure and Judgment

ment upon particular things, we ought not to conſider them ſeparately only, but alſo with a Reſpect to other things, to which they have a Relation, and with which they are conjoined.

Having premiſed theſe things in general, I anſwer next to theſe particular Inſtances propoſed. *Firſt*, That tho' the Uſe of the Spleen is not yet well known, nor can it be certainly determined, nevertheleſs we have no Reaſon to think it uſeleſs, ſeeing the Structure of it is as curious as that of the Liver, Lungs, and other Parts. The Uſe and Function of ſeveral other Veſſels were not known till of late, and after Ages may diſcover the Uſe of this too, which certainly was never placed in the Body without ſome ſpecial End or Uſe; nor muſt it be reckoned altogether uſeleſs, becauſe ſome Animals have been found to live without it: For ſo, both Men and other Animals do live without ſome Parts, which are of a known Uſe and of a ſpecial Contrivance; beſides, tho' the Loſs of the Spleen did not inſtantly put an end to Life, it might have ſhortned it, or rendred it painful and uneaſie, marring the Oeconomy of the Body. 2. As to the Mountains, they are very far from being uſeleſs; for they ſerve to collect and condenſe the Vapours which feedeth Springs and Fountains: They determine the Winds in ſome meaſure: They nouriſh divers Plants, which will not grow upon the Valleys: They are proper for Metals and Minerals, and are ſo far from ſpoiling the Beauty of the Earth, that they make it much more pleaſant, by caſting it into divers Shapes and Figures. 3. There is as much dry Land as is neceſſary either for Man or Terreſtrial Animals, nay, as much as could contain many Millions more than there are, ſo that there is no Reaſon to complain of being ſtraitned by want of Room. And it was neceſſary that there ſhould be more Sea than dry Land, partly for the Conveniency of Navigation, and partly for furniſhing ſufficient Rain to water the Earth. The Ground requires all the Rain which falleth, which, by Computation is reckoned in one

Year

Year to be Five times the Quantity of Water in the Sea. If therefore there had been leſs Water, either the Earth ſhould have been without ſufficient Rain, or when it rained the Sea ſhould have been too much emptied, which would have been very inconvenient, both for thoſe Creatures who live in it, and alſo for the Ships that ſail upon it. The *Libyan* Sands, and barren Deſarts of *Arabia*, &c. caſt no Reflection upon the wiſe Contrivance of the Earth, for it is not reaſonable to think that all Parts ſhould be alike good and excellent; Diverſity is both uſeful and pleaſant: What is wanting in theſe barren Places is ſupplied by the Richneſs of others, which are alſo rendred more delightful by the Contemplation of ſuch frightful Deſolateneſs, even as Shadows contribute to the Beauty of a Picture, and the Brightneſs of the other Colours. Beſides other Uſes which we yet know not, they may be deſigned alſo to make us ſenſible how much we owe to the Bounty of the wiſe Author of all things, who hath made ſo much of the Earth a convenient Habitation for the Children of Men. *Laſtly*, The ſame may be ſaid in Reference to the Countries about the Two Poles, which are not very conſiderable, if we compare them with the reſt of the habitable World. And beſides, they ſhow the wiſe Contrivance of the Spheroidical Figure of the Earth, and of making the Axis ſo much ſhorter than the Diameter of the Equator; for if it had been otherwiſe the frigid Zones ſhould have been much more large, and much leſs habitable. There is no way to Remedy that Inconvenience of the Country about the Poles, at leaſt in our Conception, except there were Two Suns, or that this Sun was made to move without and beyond the Tropicks, neither of which would be ſo convenient as the preſent Contrivance.

7. 3*dly*, It is ſaid, *That the World and all things in it were eternal*; *which if true* (in their Opinion) *will cut off all Pretext of Contrivance and Deſign: For if nothing was ever made, then nothing alſo was ever contrived, there being no Occaſion for contriving what was already exiſtent.*

8. But

8. But this Opinion of the Eternity of the World is taken up without any Shadow of Reaſon or Probability. It is a precarious Aſſertion, which being denied can never be proved. 2. It contradicts the Univerſal Tradition of Mankind, which hath always atteſted that the World had a Beginning. 3. It is againſt the current Teſtimony of all Hiſtory, which traceth the Origin of Nations and People, the Inventions of Arts and Sciences, and which ſheweth that all have happened within the Space of leſs than Six Thouſand Years, according to the moſt probable, (if not certain) Calculation, which could not be if the World and Man had been Eternal. Therefore *Lucretius* reaſoneth very well in his Fifth Book.

But grant the World Eternal, *grant it knew*
No Infancy, *and grant it never New,*
Why then no Wars, *our* Poets *Songs imploy*
Beyond the Siege of Thebes, *or that of* Troy?
Why former Heroes *fell without a Name?*
Why not their Battles *told by laſting Fame?*
But 'tis as I declare; and thoughtful Man
Not long ago *and all the* World *began:*
And therefore Arts *that lay but* rude *before*
Are publiſh'd now, we now Increaſe *the Store.*
We perfect all the Old *and find out* more
Shippings *improv'd, we add New Oars and Wings,*
And Muſick *now is found and ſpeaking Strings.*
Theſe Truths, *this* Riſe of things *we* lately *know.*

4*thly*, Tho' we may fanſie that theſe greater and permanent Bodies of the Planets and Stars may have been Eternal, becauſe they have laſted ſo many Thouſand Years without any viſible Change, as is acknowledged by all, yet we cannot bring our Imagination to conceive the Eternity of ſucceſſive Beings poſſible, for a great many Contradictions and Abſurdities do follow it. If Mankind had never any other Production than what is now,

now, then there was never any Man who had not a Beginning: And if all had a Beginning, then Mankind cannot be Eternal; therefore we muſt of Neceſſity acknowledge the Production of ſome one or more (from whom the reſt have deſcended) in a manner different from the preſent: And there is no Account of the firſt Production of Mankind ſo reaſonable or ſo probable, not to ſay now certain, as that which declares the immediate Creation of one Man and one Woman by the Hand of God. The like may be ſaid of all other ſucceſſive Beings. But 5*thly* and *Laſtly*, Tho' we ſhould force our ſelves to grant the Eternity of the World and all particular Beings, yet it could not be reaſonably inferred from thence that there is no God; for they, who deſire this large Conceſſion, muſt grant to us too, which cannot poſſibly be denied, that there have been from all Eternity Inſtances of great Power and Wiſdom, from which it neceſſarily follows, that there is an Eternal, Wiſe, and Mighty Being; for Power and Wiſdom muſt proceed from ſomething that is wiſe and powerful. Therefore the Old Philoſophers, who did hold the Eternity of the World, did believe it a neceſſary Emanation from the Being of God, and thought not that it did, or could ſubſiſt without him.

9. It is 4*thly*, Objected againſt the Being of a God, *That if it was, it would render the Being of other things impoſſible; for if he was, he would be infinite, and if infinite there could be no Room for the Exiſtence of other things.* But this Argument proceeds upon a miſtaken Notion of the Infinite Nature of God, as if he was ſome groſs material Subſtance vaſtly extended, whereas he is a Spirit, that is, a Subſtance altogether different from Matter or Body, who hath not the Properties of it; and conſequently, we cannot draw juſt or true Concluſions about him from what is obſervable in them. God's Infinity is not infinite Extenſion; and tho' his Omnipreſence hath ſome Reſemblance to it, yet the Spirituality of his Nature makes his Ubiquity and Omnipreſence in no wiſe incompatible

incompatible with the Exiſtence of Material Beings or Corporeal Subſtances: Nay, they are only ſuſtained by the Infinity of his Eſſence; and therefore the Exiſtence of ſo many finite things, which have no Self-Sufficiency to exiſt of themſelves, doth evidently demonſtrate the Exiſtence of an Infinite Eſſence as the Cauſe and Upholder of them.

It would be tedious to conſider all the little Cavils and Objections of Atheiſts againſt a Deity. The moſt material are reducible to thoſe we have now propoſed, and may be refuted by the Anſwers which we have now given; for they proceed either from wrong Apprehenſions of the Nature and Attributes of God, or from Ignorance of the Nature and Relation of other things, or from an obſtinate Reſiſtance of what is *de facto* evident; and all of them demonſtrate their Unreaſonableneſs and Abſurdity, which doth further appear by the abſurd and unreaſonable Conſequences of not acknowledging a Deity, which is a ſecond Way of proving it.

10. For, if there be no God, then it neceſſarily follows, That either every thing made it ſelf, or that all things came from nothing, and that there are Effects which have no Cauſe; for there is Life, Senſe, and Reaſon, without any being capable to produce them: And there are artificial Contrivances, regular Proceedings, and wiſe Adaptation of things to Ends and Purpoſes far above the Power and Capacity of any thing which is exiſtent. Theſe and many ſuch things follow the Denial of a God, which are not only great Difficulties, but ſuch groſs and ſenſeleſs Abſurdities as no thinking Perſon can either ſwallow or digeſt.

As therefore Deformity ſheweth Shape and Proportion beautiful, ſo the Belief of a Deity appears more reaſonable, by the Abſurdity and Unreaſonableneſs of Atheiſm, which contradicts common Senſe, overturns the agreed Principles of Knowledge and Reaſon, confounds Chance and Contrivance, Accident and Deſign, and which has its Recourſe to Wild, Romantick, and moſt precarious Hypotheſes; for they cannot ſhun the owning an Infinity, and the Exiſtence of ſomething from Eternity; and they are forced to acknowledge that things are framed according to the Rules of Art and Proportion. Now is it not more reaſonable to aſcribe the conſtant Obſervance of theſe Rules to an Intelligent Being, than to Chance or no Cauſe? For there is no middle thing betwixt them to be fixed on; either the one or the other muſt take place. *Nature*, which they talk ſo much

of, is an *Obſcure Word* for concealing their Thoughts and Sentiments: If by this they mean ſomething diſtinct from *Matter*, which moves and directs it, their *Nature* is God in Diſguiſe; and if they muſt flee to this for a rational Account of the Production of things, why do they quarrel at the Word [God] which carries a clearer *Idea*, and in the Senſe of which all the World is agreed. Tho' this *Nature* of theirs be equivalent, yet it is more myſterious, and therefore it ſmells of ſome deſigned Perverſeneſs, as if by the Uſe of this Word, and the Diſuſe of the other, they would turn Peoples Thoughts from God, and God from the Honour of being the Creator of all things. But if by *Nature* they only underſtand *certain Laws*, and I know not what *Ordinances*, by which things muſt move; is this ſufficient to explain the firſt Productions of things? For tho' it ſhould be true that Matter cannot move but according to theſe Laws, and that moving by them in proceſs of Time the Work could have been produced as it is at preſent, after that *Romantick Manner* of *Carteſius*; yet there was no Neceſſity that *Matter* ſhould move at all, nor could it move of it ſelf. Wherefore whether they will or not, they muſt own the Exiſtence of ſomething *prior* to *Matter* it ſelf, or the Motion of it, which *Carteſius* was ſenſible of, and therefore he could not build his airy and fanciful *Syſtem*, without ſuppoſing the Exiſtence of a Deity. And if he had kept his Eye upon this infinitely perfect Being, and conſidered the World and all particular things as his Work; if inſtead of a vain curious Enquiry how things ſhould have been, if Matter once moved had been left to it ſelf, he had ſhewed how things are, and explained the admirable Contrivance of them, if he had given us a Hiſtory of Nature, and deſcribed the Wiſdom of God in the Make, Order, Place, and Relation of particular things; I ſay, If *Carteſius* had done this, as he ſeems to have been able for it, the World would have been more obliged to him, his Philoſophy ſhould have been more rational and ſatisfactory, more uſeful to others, and of more laſting Fame to himſelf; Whereas now by turning his Thoughts from the Ends and Uſes of things, and the Wiſdom of the Author and Contriver, he has turn'd his Back upon the only true Light that was to have guided him; he has grop'd in the Dark and produced nothing but uſeleſs Conjectures and the extravagant Ravings of his Brain, which tickled Men at firſt, as all Novelties uſe to do, but which wiſe, inquiſitive, and think-

ing

ing Men will, and muſt diſguſt becauſe there wants Solidity.

As God is the firſt Cauſe and Author of all things, ſo the Belief of a Deity is the Foundation of all ſolid Reaſon; what is not built on this is Nonſence and Abſurdity. I know the Atheiſts arrogate to themſelves Wit, and Judgment, and Knowledge above others, and do think that it is the Ignorance and Credulity of the *Bulk of Mankind* (as one lately Words it) which make them to be of another Belief. But I pray you, muſt they carry away Senſe and Underſtanding from others, becauſe they are ſo vain as to think it? Do not thoſe in *Bedlam* think themſelves wiſer than others? All the reſt of the World are Fools in their Eyes, and thoſe who keep them there, not only Fools, but Oppreſſors and moſt unjuſt. And yet Atheiſm is a more extravagant and pernicious Madneſs, which it is the Intereſt of Mankind to keep from ſpreading. But alas it has been ſuffered to take Root and ſpread, nay it is cheriſhed and encouraged. Men walk the Streets and publickly act this Madneſs. In every Corner they throw their Squibbs of Scoffs and Drollery againſt the Almighty Author of their Being. They meet in Companies to concert how they may moſt wittily expoſe him, and what is the readieſt way to render him ridiculous in the Eyes of others: A Clinch, or Jeſt, or puny Witticiſm is received and entertained as an uſeful Diſcovery, and carried about with all Diligence. Tho' there be no Reaſon why the Atheiſt ſhould be a Zealot, there being no Obligation on him to propagate his Opinions; and becauſe the leſs they are entertained by others he is the more ſecure; yet no *Sect* is become more zealous of late than *Atheiſts*, and their *Fraternity*, who maintain their Cauſe by an affronted Impudence, by the Exerciſe of a froathy Wit more than Reaſon, and by Jeſting and Drollery rather than ſerious Argument. And is this a reaſonable or commendable way of handling a Matter ſo ſerious and important? Should Impudence run down Evidence? Should a Jeſt or a Witticiſm be of more Weight than the Dictates of common Senſe and ſober Reaſon? If theſe Men were capable of Counſel, I would ask them whether they are abſolutely ſure that they are in the right? Are they able to demonſtrate that there is no God? This is more than any ever yet pretended to; and if they cannot pretend to this, ought they not to walk very cautiouſly, If there be a God, as there may, for any Aſſurance they have to the contrary, what then have they to expect for theſe bold

bold Insults and that wicked Opposition to him? A modest Enquiry into Truth, even into the Existence of God himself, is reasonable, and cannot offend either God or Man. But Spite and Insolency cannot by any Means be justified. It shews a Desire that there should be no God, more than Doubts and Scruples about his Existence, which must needs provoke the most high God, and draw down his Judgments, both on those who are guilty, and on the Land which cherisheth them.

The CONCLUSION.

THO' the Existence of God be most evident, yet I thought my self obliged to insist the longer upon proving it, because it is of such Importance; for it is the Foundation of all Knowledge and Certainty as well as of all Morality and Religion. The Belief of a Deity is the first Article of the Christian Creed, upon which the Truth and Certainty of the rest depend: And therefore 'twas necessary to shew that this is no vain Hypothesis, or imaginary Supposition; but a Truth loudly proclaimed, and strongly confirmed not only by Reason, but every part of the World. So that whatever the Atheist may arrogate to himself, and whatever Esteem may be paid to him unjustly in this corrupt Age, yet he is so far from being wiser than others, that by the universal Voice of Nature as well as Scripture, he will be declared *a Fool who saith that there is no God.*

When I have proved that this God doth rule the World, which is also included in this first Faith, I shall then consider what it is to live by it, and shall shew how necessary it is to the being just and righteous. And I hope that there is such Satisfaction given in these Essays, that who shall read them will be desirous of the other that are promised.

ERRATA.

In Age, 1, line 2. read *is*, p. 3. l. 7. r. *Scripture*, p. 7. l. 29. r. *Principle*, p. 12. l. 12. r. *so well*, p. 13, l. 17. for *touches* r. *touch*, p. 19. l. 8. f. *Squares* r. *Square*, p. 23. l. ult. for *is* r. *are*, p. 30 l. 31. r. *as well*, ibid. l. 33. r. *a part*, p. 42. l. 25. r. *the* f. *these*. p. 45. l. 22. r. *exceedingly*, p. 45. l. 13. f. *it* r. *is*, p. 46. l. 21. f. *should* r. *would*, p. 47. l. 14. r. *enjoined*, p. 57. l. 20. r. *there*.

FINIS.